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THE VICTORIAN AGE
OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE

VOLUME I.

Victoria

THE VICTORIAN AGE OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

MRS. OLIPHANT

AUTHOR OF
"A LITERARY HISTORY OF ENGLAND," "THE MAKERS OF FLORENCE," ETC.

NEW YORK
LOVELL, CORYELL, & COMPANY

Her Majesty, Queen Victoria.

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BY

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"THE MAKERS OF FLORENCE," ETC.

VOLUME I.

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PREFACE.

It is always somewhat rash to attempt to determine the final place in literature of contemporary writers. There is nothing in which the generations make greater mistakes. Looking back upon the past age the reader smiles if he sometimes shudders to see Davenant or Congreve placed above Shakespeare, the age of Anne regarding as barbarous the age of Elizabeth, and in nearer days Southey placed on an equal rank with Byron or with Wordsworth. Posterity, we cannot doubt, will displace some of our greater and lesser lights in the same way; but we must accept the disabilities of contemporary judgment along with its advantages, and with the certainty that what is written here is for the reader of to-day, and not for that eventual judge whose verdict will ultimately prevail, let us say what we will.

In a record of so large and widely spreading a literature as our own it is inevitable that some names must be left out or too lightly mentioned. The present writers have endeavoured as far as possible to include all; but for any unintentional shortcomings in this respect must throw themselves upon the charity of the gentle and courteous reader.

Since these lines were written, we, and we may say all the English-speaking portions of the world, have sustained a loss greater than has been felt since Scott fell, like a great tower, changing the very perspective and proportions of the national landscape. Lord Tennyson has departed from among us full of years and honours; so long ours that we dared not wish to detain him, yet so much a part of all the noblest thoughts and hopes which he has inspired, in patriotism, in religion, in song, that it seemed almost impossible he should die. He has gone in a noble tranquillity and faith which is one of the greatest lessons he has ever given to the country he so much loved: and his death puts back this record almost as by the end of the epoch which it treats.

Others names less important have also vanished from the lists of living men between the writing and the printing of these annals. The reader will understand that this makes no difference to the estimate and criticism undertaken here.

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THE VICTORIAN AGE OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE STATE OF LITERATURE AT THE QUEEN'S ACCESSION, AND OF THOSE WHOSE WORK WAS ALREADY DONE.

State of literature at the Queen's Accession.

THE period which witnessed Her Majesty's happy accession was not in itself a very glorious one, at least as far as literature is concerned. It was a season of lull, of silence and emptiness, such as must naturally come after the exhausting brilliance of the days which had just gone by. It was a period of transition too, in which many great names were falling into silence, and the men who were destined to take their places were but slowly pushing to the front, and beginning to make reputations for themselves. But these new-comers seemed as yet poor compared with those whom almost everyone living had known; their methods were not the same—were even sometimes offensively opposed to them; and the world had hardly made up its mind whether it was worth while to admire or even to look closely at the rising generation. Even now, with the works of Carlyle

A transition period.

and Tennyson, and many other lights of no little brilliance to look back upon, we would hardly compare the prosperous and fruitful Victorian age with those few, glorious years of the Regency to which Wordsworth, Coleridge and Sir Walter, Byron, Shelley and Keats lent their united lustre. It was a bad enough age, in many ways—though England never in all her days held so proud a position—but the glory could not depart from the eyes of the men who had been accustomed to receive fresh from the press the last poem of Byron, the last sonnet of Wordsworth, the last fairy trifle of Shelley or Keats, or—most generally acceptable treasure of all—the last Waverley novel. It was, perhaps, almost too much in some ways; it seems impossible to believe that one year could contain much more than "Childe Harold" and the "Heart of Midlothian;" and it is little wonder if the world, bewildered by the dazzling blaze of genius, threw up its cap and shouted as loud for Moore and Campbell, Southey and Rogers, as for any of the greater names.

The Illustrious years of the Regency.

Almost all of these were gone, however, in the beginning of the Victorian period, some in the vigour of youth and some when approaching age. Only Wordsworth remained, who lived on for many years in the fulness of days and of honour, to receive in a few years the only formal tribute that the sovereign can pay to poetry. But even he had practically ceased writing; and society in general was much in

Wordsworth.

the condition of a crowd at the close of some great spectacle, when they pay their pennies and go home, some of them thanking heaven that it is over, and some wondering whether they will ever see anything so fine again; but few indeed ready to turn their wearied eyes to a fresh exhibition.

The past age and the present.

The past age, however, was still present in its minor lights, although most of them had already well-nigh exhausted their powers of production; and, though many of the greater writers had died early, the world was still full of those who had known them and watched their progress. Indeed, it is most extraordinary to observe the gulf between their age and ours, when we consider how little the dates of birth had to do with it. Even the youngest among us have known of Carlyle, at least, as a living personality, while very few among the oldest could possibly have any acquaintance with Keats except by his works. Yet Keats was only two months older than Carlyle. Sir Walter Scott had not been dead quite five years at the beginning of the reign, Coleridge hardly three; and Coleridge's children were all living, though but feebly shadowing forth their father's greatness, notwithstanding the true poetical gift of Hartley Coleridge, and something worthy of note in his sister Sara, whose "Phantasmion" was published in the year 1837, with which our record begins. Of the lesser names, Southey was living, in the peaceful and honourable tranquillity that his gentle and lovable

"Phantasmion."

Southey, Poet-Laureate.

spirit merited. He had received his appointment as Poet Laureate nearly a quarter of a century before, and was placidly engaged in editing Cowper, a congenial task. But the remnant of life before him was melancholy enough. In 1837 his first wife died, one of those celebrated three Miss Frickers, whose alliance was so oddly suggested as a step to the establishment of the great system of Pantisocracy, and whose names are forever associated with the brilliant band of young poets; and he had married for the second time Caroline Bowles, herself a minor poet of some reputation, who was his untiring nurse through some painful years. He died in 1843, and was succeeded in the post of Laureate by Wordsworth who, though he hardly produced anything in this reign, beyond some "Memorials of a Tour in Italy," published in 1837,—for "The Prelude" published after his death was, though so long withheld from the public, an early composition—lived on to the year 1850. As late as the death of Southey there were several of the old society of wits and poets still remaining. Everyone remembers the delightful account of the struggle for the Laureateship on that occasion, as described in the Bon Gaultier Ballads, "after the manner of the Right Honourable T—B—M—;" and how "young Alfred" made the very sensible suggestion that the poets should fight for the place. Among the many objectors to the project come various long familiar names.

Words-worth, Poet-Laureate.

Bon Gaultier Ballads—Struggle for the Laureateship.

"Mine are the lists of love," said Moore, "and not the lists of Mars;"
Said Hunt, "I love the jars of wine but shun the combat's jars."
"I'm old," said Samuel Rogers; "faith," said Campbell, "so am I;"
"And I'm in holy orders, sir," quoth Tom of Ingoldsby.

Of Leigh Hunt we shall have occasion to speak in a future chapter. Thomas Moore, who was approaching sixty, at the commencement of the Queen's reign, produced nothing after that date but a tale of no great merit called "Alciphron," and a history of Ireland, which has probably never been read since it was published. His mind also failed a year or two before his bodily strength gave way; he died in 1852 at the age of seventy-three. Samuel Rogers, that strange mixture of banker and poet, whose breakfasts were so much more famous and memorable than his poetry, was seventy-four, and had retired from the actual arena of letters to take the place as a patron and host of poets, which suited him better. In this comfortable retirement he lived to a great age, dying in his ninety-fourth year, in 1855. Thomas Campbell, a man of genius, entirely ignorant of his own powers, who wrote poetry when the spirit moved him and verses when it did not, was just sixty, and was yet to produce some poems quite unworthy of his fame, though a ballad or two like that of "Napoleon and the British Seaman" still proved that the fire of true poetry was not entirely extinguished in him. Campbell died in 1844. Barham,

Thomas Moore.

Samuel Rogers.

Thomas Campbell.

the last named in the verse quoted, belongs to a different group, of whom we shall speak elsewhere. Among other poets still living, who had retired into silence, almost or entirely complete, we may mention Joanna Baillie, the authoress of those "Plays on the Passions" which had so unaccountable a success in their day, who was seventy-five at the Queen's accession, but lived for fourteen years longer in her peaceful retirement at Hampstead; and Lady Nairne, the author of the "Laird o' Cockpen" and of the still more popular "Land o' the Leal." James Montgomery, a mild and gentle poet, the author of many verses dear to pious souls, and his namesake "Satan" Montgomery, as he was called, whose bombastic and pompous "Epic" procured him a kind of popularity, and the final distinction of being extinguished by an amusing article of Macaulay's in the Edinburgh Review—still lived to contribute to Victorian literature, the first a little noticed collection of Hymns, the second several volumes of turgid verse.

Joanna Baillie.

Lady Nairne.

James Montgomery.

There had been many women of note among the writers of the departing age, especially in the department of fiction. Of the three sister authors, Jane Austen, Maria Edgeworth and Susan Ferrier, who had brought into so clear a light the real ways of life of the England, Scotland and Ireland of their time, only the latter two remained. Miss Ferrier, whose great reputation rests upon three novels only,

Jane Austen.

Maria Edgeworth.

Susan Ferrier.

published the last and least successful of these in 1831, and wrote no more, though she lived until 1864; while Miss Edgeworth, who had also apparently retired from the literary world, made only one re-appearance, when over eighty, with the story of "Orlandino," which it would be unfair to compare with her earlier works. Another Irish novelist, Lady Morgan, who had created a great sensation thirty years before with her "Wild Irish Girl," had also laid aside her pen, though she re-appeared a year or two later with a work of a very different kind, entitled, "Woman and Her Master." At the beginning of the reign this lady, grown old and resting upon her modest laurels, aspired to the position of a leader and patroness of the literary world, entertaining at her evening receptions the authors who had breakfasted with Samuel Rogers in the morning. Another *salon* of a different and perhaps more attractive kind, was presided over by Lady Blessington, also an Irish lady, possessed of a good deal of talent, who worked hard as a journey-woman in the profession of letters, writing novels, editing albums and annuals, a fashion of the day, and turning her hand to any work that offered. Miss Porter, the muse of the "Scottish Chiefs," and Mrs. Opie, the authoress of a series of novels with a high moral purpose, still lives; but neither of them continued to write after the commencement of the reign. The same may be said of Mrs. Hofland, a writer of moral

Lady Morgan.

Lady Blessington.

Miss Porter

Mrs. Opie.

Mrs. Hofland.

stories of a simpler kind for girls, and like Mrs. Opie, the wife of a well-known painter. Another authoress of the day, Letitia Elizabeth Landon, better known by her initials as L. E. L., will be remembered rather by many little graceful trifles of verse than either by her novels or her more serious poetical efforts. Miss Landon belongs to a younger generation than any of those we have quoted, but the swift and melancholy end of her life obliges us to notice her here. The year after the Queen's accession, she married a Mr. Maclean, who had been appointed governor of Cape Coast Castle, and, following her husband to his post, died in Africa, a short time after her marriage. She had published in 1837 a small essay in autobiography, entitled, "Traits and Trials of Early Life."

Letitia Elizabeth Landon: "L. E. L."

The old traditions of what might be called the correct school of fiction were most suitably represented by one, who, though over seventy years of age at the beginning of the reign, had no idea of relinquishing his work, the then much-belauded author of "Tremaine." Robert Plumer Ward, however, only started as a novelist at the age of sixty, and his first two novels, "Tremaine" and "De Vere," were received with extraordinary favour. In the first year of our period, 1837, we find in a review of his "Illustrations of Human Life," the following tribute to his greatness :—

Robert Plumer Ward.

Tribute to his greatness.

"There is no one," we are told, "who has

brought to his pleasing occupation (*videlicet*, the writing of novels,) a mind more enriched with the best knowledge drawn from the study of books, an experience of life more various and mature ; an observation more attentive, or a taste more elegant and exact than the author of 'Tremaine.'"

It is a criticism to live up to ; yet we fear that there are but few now who could say at a moment's notice what manner of book "Tremaine" might be, or even who was its author. Two other novels, "De Clifford" and "Chatsworth," together with a quasi-historical study of the "Real Character of the Revolution of 1688" complete the list of Ward's contributions to the literature of the present reign. Another equally respectable school of fiction, that of the historico-sensational novel, was as worthily represented by George Payne Rainsford James. We have all been accustomed to laugh at the time-honoured scene with which his stories were wont to open—where the last beams of the setting sun gilded the valley along which rode two horsemen, one of whom appeared to be some six or seven summers older than the other ; but we have had time since then to become accustomed to even more bombastic and inflated styles, with perhaps even less literary merit to redeem them. We certainly cannot see that the historical novel was in the least degree improved by Ainsworth, though his tales did certainly march a little faster. Perhaps, it is a matter of congratulation that, at least

The historico-sensational Novel.

G P. R. James.

Ainsworth.

since the death of the late James Grant, we have had no exact representative of this school of fiction among us.

Thomas Love Peacock.

A very different class of adventurer in this branch of literature was represented by Thomas Love Peacock. We use the word adventurer advisedly, for we cannot regard Peacock's entry into the field of fiction as by any means an authorized one. One cannot help feeling that he did not want to write novels, but that he found that he could not get at the public in any other way ; overflowing with wit and satire, as he was, and with so much to say on social subjects, the only legitimate outlet he could find was in the conventional form accepted by the public. The consequence is that his novels are not novels in the proper sense of the word ; they are rather a concoction of whimsical ideas, flavoured with bright dialogue and spiced with almost too great a profusion of epigram, the whole being served up in a kind of novel paste, something like that of a game pie, which is hardly intended to be eaten by itself, its legitimate purpose being only to fence in and keep together the dainties within. For an extra seasoning, his extraordinary power of light, easy versification, specimens of which are scattered through all his novels, would have made up for many shortcomings in other matters. Peacock's principal works, "Headlong Hall," "Crotchet Castle," and "Nightmare Abbey," had been published several

His power of epigram and versification

years before the date with which our history commences, but his last novel of "Gryll Grange" appeared much later, in 1861, when the writer had reached the age of seventy-six. There is much in this last story, which is in his best style, but we seem to miss the ease and *abandon* of his earlier attempts. Here, for instance, as in "Crotchet Castle," we have an admirable study of the jovial, learned, cultivated country parson, as sound in his theological opinions as in his judgment of different vintages, and as conscientious in the discharge of his duties as he is pleasant to meet at the dinner-table—a species happily not so entirely extinct as the modern reformer would give us to understand;—but yet it is hardly the same man. Dr. Opimian is like Dr. Folliott crystallised, and the whole story, of which he forms almost the most important character, has a new air of formality, almost of stiffness, to which we are not accustomed from this author's hand. The dialogue is as witty as ever, but it is too entirely a dialogue, a set piece, not an interlude in the general composition. To return to our old similitude we might say that the dish which Peacock served up at this late hour was composed of as good ingredients as the former ones, but it had been standing too long, and the zest was, to a certain extent, gone out of it. Yet we can forgive much to the author of such a disquisition as that of Dr. Opimian on the Wisdom of Parliament.

"Gryll Grange."

Its fun and satire.

"Dr. Opimian on the Wisdom of Parliament."

"Why, sir, I do not call that a misnomer. The term Wisdom is used in a parliamentary sense. The wisdom of Parliament is a wisdom *sui generis*. It is not like any other wisdom. It is not the wisdom of Socrates, nor the wisdom of Solomon. It is the wisdom of Parliament. It is not easily analysed or defined; but it is very easily understood. It has achieved wonderful things by itself, and still more when Science has come to its aid. Between them, they have poisoned the Thames, and killed the fish in the river. A little further development of the same wisdom and science will complete the poisoning of the air, and kill the dwellers on the banks. It is pleasant that the precious effluvium has been brought so efficiently under the Wisdom's own wise nose. Thereat the nose, like Trinculo's, has been in great indignation. The Wisdom has ordered the Science to do something. The Wisdom does not know what, nor the Science either. But the Wisdom has empowered the Science to spend some millions of money; and this no doubt the Science will do. When the money has been spent, it will be found that the something has been worse than nothing. The Science will want more money to do some other something, and the Wisdom will grant it."

It would be difficult to imagine a pleasanter blending of fun and satire. The only other appearances made by Peacock in the present reign, were a few scattered pieces, chiefly in Fraser's Magazine to which he contributed—together with other things,—a series of articles upon the various memoirs of his old friend, Shelley. He died in 1866.

Henry Hallam.

Among the graver writers of the day we should mention, in the first place, the great historian, Henry Hallam. He also had been for some years silent, but the profound research and study required by the severe muse of history, authorise and justify such long periods of apparent quiescence. It was nearly

twenty years since he had laid before the world his wonderful picture of "Europe during the Middle Ages," undoubtedly the most entertaining and perhaps the most truly literary of his works. Nine years later came the *magnum opus*, the "Constitutional History of England," a profound study of a profound subject, which has naturally little in the way of literary graces to recommend it to the ordinary reader. It is, indeed, impossible to read it at all without experiencing the naturally repugnant feeling that one is receiving instruction; it is entirely impossible to play with, and somewhat serious to read, but of all books of knowledge, the easiest and most fascinating to study. From these grave treatises, the historian turned to a subject as profound in its way but capable of much lighter treatment. In 1837 appeared the first volume of the "Introduction to the Literature of Europe" in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, which was completed in 1839. To enclose himself yet more strictly within the circle of literary art, Hallam excluded from his subject most of the severer classes of books in which the aid of such art is little needed. Even history, "unless when it has been written with peculiar beauty of language or philosophical spirit," he considered to lie outside the sphere of his researches. The result was not satisfactory. The history of literature is written in a style far less attractive than that of the Constitution; nor do many of his criticisms inspire either respect

"Europe during the Middle Ages."

"Constitutional History of England."

"Introduction to the Literature of Europe."

for his judgment or sympathy with his taste. The world has justly refused to place the history of literature on the same level with either of Hallam's former works. Yet for those who seek the better part of failures as well as triumphs, there is something pleasing in the very love of his books which is constantly coming before us. The end of his life was sad and lonely, and the books of which he wrote were the almost only companions left to the bereaved old man. It would seem as if some higher and gentler sense of the beauty of his subject which he found difficult to interpret, trained as he was in the habit of sitting in judgment on the subtle questions and conflicting theories of history would seem to have stolen into his mind; no man without the most genuine appreciation of literature could have discribed so feelingly how "the remembrance of early reading came on his (Milton's) dark and lonely path like the moon emerging from the clouds." Let us hope that he too felt its consolation, for fortune had laid her hand on him as heavily as upon Milton.

The end of his life.

Among other living historians there is hardly any name of greater note than that of John Lingard, the only voice heard up to that time from the Catholic side. Dr. Lingard's principal work was done some years before the Queen's accession, but he lived on till 1851, fulfilling his quiet duties as parish priest in the obscure Lancashire village where he had always had leisure to pursue his historical studies,

John Lingard.

and from which even the offer of a Cardinal's hat had failed to lure him. One feels almost doubtful whether to class among the serious writers, that genuine curiosity of literature, Isaac Disraeli. There have been other such men with perhaps as wide reading and as great a turn for picking up the stray odds and ends of literature, which acquire a factitious value from the mere fact that the world has designedly and justly passed them over as little worthy of preservation; but perhaps no one has had the courage to cast the undigested fragments of an extensive and peculiar acquaintance with all kinds of literature upon the world as Disraeli did. The "Curiosities of Literature" is a book which is delightful to pick up for a moment or two, but distressing to read persistently. It is mournful to see such immense knowledge put to so little use. Probably Disraeli was not the kind of man to have made any more practical use of his learning. There seems to be a strange twist in his intellect which has, oddly enough, some resemblance to the curious sleight of mind which marked the much more practical career of his extraordinarily clever son, the late Lord Beaconsfield. The only contribution of Isaac Disraeli to the literature of the present reign was his volume on the "Amenities of Literature," published in 1841.

Isaac Disraeli.

"Curiosities of Literature."

Of a very different character was another of the graver writers of the day, whom we feel bound to

notice here, though, as a point of fact, he contributed hardly anything to the literature of the reign of Victoria. John Foster, a Baptist minister, was a man of no particular erudition, but with strong views of his own on many ordinary, every-day subjects, which he felt it his duty to give to the world. He himself confessed his "total want of all knowledge of intellectual philosophy and of all metaphysical reading," but he believed that his own "observation and reflection" supplied all deficiencies. His essays, many of which were addressed in a series of letters to the lady whom he was about to marry, were highly valued in their time, especially those on "Popular Ignorance," on "Decision of Character," and on the reasons why people in the upper classes found a difficulty in appreciating properly the evangelical movement. In later life Foster contributed much to the "Eclectic Review," in which his best known essay, that upon "Popular Ignorance," appeared. He died in 1843.

John Foster.

His Essays.

Another department of literature which claims our attention at this period includes the small company of men who were devoting their energies to the diffusion and popularisation of literature and knowledge of all kinds among the classes who were least able to educate themselves. The chief credit of this movement may fairly be ascribed to Lord Brougham, whose great talents and lofty position enabled him to originate and carry out conceptions from which

The movement for diffusion and popularization of Literature.

Lord Brougham.

others would have shrunk as unattainable,—though, indeed, much the same work was achieved by the Chambers brothers in Scotland by dint of sheer incessant labour. Henry Peter Brougham, the son of a Cumberland gentleman of small property, and through his mother, grand-nephew to the historian, Robertson, was born in Edinburgh in 1778 and educated at the High School and Edinburgh University. After being called to the Scottish bar in 1800, and having tested his abilities by practising as Poor Advocate (*i. e.*, the advocate officially appointed to represent those who were unable to pay for legal advice) on the southern circuit, he joined with Jeffrey and Sydney Smith in starting the "Edinburgh Review," an enterprise of which we shall have more to say in a future chapter. To the first number of the Review he contributed three articles, and is said to have been responsible for no less than eighty in the first twenty issues. This was the commencement of that life of restless energy which kept Brougham always to the front in whatever circle he found himself and led him to do much good work and many regrettable actions. A good story is told of him at this period, which illustrates curiously the clear and definite form which his ambition had already taken. The authorship of some of the articles in the first number was being discussed in Brougham's presence—(the incognito of the various writers was very carefully preserved at first)—at the

His birth and education.

Called to the Bar.

Assists in starting the "Edinburgh Review."

The object of his ambition. Anecdote.

table of Mr. Fletcher, a prominent Whig advocate, and the host spoke in high praise of a review of Professor Black's "Chemistry." The writer of such article could, he said, do or be anything he pleased. "What, Mr. Fletcher!" cried Brougham, leaning eagerly forward, "may he be Lord Chancellor?" "On which," says Mrs. Fletcher who relates the anecdote, "my husband repeated his words with emphasis, 'Yes, Lord Chancellor, or anything he desires.'" And Lord Chancellor he was, some quarter of a century later. It is curious to compare this story with some similar predictions which have lately come before us, the confident expectation that W. E. Gladstone, then merely a brilliant young undergraduate and the ardent professor of an ante-diluvian Toryism, would come to be Prime Minister, and still more remarkable that young Tait would one day be Archbishop of Canterbury.

Similar predictions.

Edinburgh, however, soon proved too small a sphere to contain Brougham, and he determined to settle in London, having entered one of the English Inns of Court in 1803. In the same year he published an essay on the "Colonial Policy of European Nations," which received considerable praise. In London he kept up his work for the "Edinburgh Review" and studied law, besides exerting himself in the anti-slavery cause, which gained him the approval and support of Wilberforce and his party. In 1806 he accompanied the Earl of Rosslyn and Lord St. Vin-

Brougham settles in London.

His Essay on the "Colonial Policy of European Nations."

cent on their special mission to Lisbon as secretary, and gained fresh credit for the ability he displayed in this capacity. In 1808 he was called to the English bar, where he achieved considerable distinction, though apparently more by oratory than by the other branches of forensic science which are more highly approved by the legal profession, and in 1815 was returned to Parliament as member for Camelford. With his subsequent public career we have little to do; it is enough to say that after being for a long time one of the most prominent leaders of the opposition, he was raised to the woolsack in 1830 on the Whigs coming into power, a position which he retained till 1835. He was for a long time the chief adviser of Caroline, Princess of Wales, and the leading counsel for the defence at her trial. He did good work as the opponent of slavery and the advocate of law reform, but it is through the services he rendered to the cause of education—understood in its broadest and most catholic sense—that he comes into our sphere. In 1825 appeared his valuable "Observations on the Education of the People," in which he urged the necessity of increasing the knowledge of the poorer classes by the introduction of popular hand-books, such as would give a sufficient insight into many subjects that were now hidden from them. In the following year he formed the "Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge" to carry out his suggestions, and wrote the first volume for their publi-

Secretary to the mission to Lisbon.

Raised to the woolsack.

Chief adviser of Caroline, Princess of Wales.

Forms the "Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge."

cation himself, "A Discourse on the Objects, Advantages and Pleasures of Science."

Charles Knight.

In the second year of its existence this Society entrusted its publications to Charles Knight, who had already done something of the same kind of work on his own account. Charles Knight, the son of a Windsor bookseller, born in 1791, had till now lived a struggling life as journalist, editor and publisher, his chief success having been achieved by a short-lived periodical called, "Knight's Quarterly Magazine," to which Praed, Macaulay, William Sydney Walker, Derwent and Henry Nelson Coleridge, and John Moultrie were the chief contributors. A more efficient aide-de-camp Brougham could not have found, especially as his own multifarious employments would not allow him to devote too great a portion of his own time to the work, and he had already turned to the prosecution of another pet scheme, the provision of better scientific education for the upper classes, towards which a great step was made in 1828 by the establishment of the London University, of which the original project had been laid before the world three years before in the "Observations on Education."

"Knight's Quarterly Review."—Eminent contributors.

Origin of the London University.

While working zealously for the society, instituted by Brougham, Knight conceived the plan of starting a somewhat similar enterprise on his own account, which shortly afterwards took form in his "Library of Entertaining Knowledge." His right hand man

"Library of Entertaining Knowledge."

in this and other undertakings was George Lillie Craik, who attracted much notice by a collection of popular biographies under the title of "The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties," an expression which has become almost proverbial. Among other contributions to the same series were his "Sketches of the History of Literature and Learning in England," afterwards enlarged into a "History of English Literature and of the English Language," published in 1861. Craik was also the principal editor of Knight's Pictorial History of England," begun in 1838, and the author of many other historical works. In 1849 he was appointed to the professorship of English History and Literature in the Queen's College at Belfast, which he retained till his death in 1866. Among other writers who contributed to the "Library of Entertaining Knowledge," may be mentioned Sir Henry Ellis, principal librarian of the British Museum, whose name is best known in connection with his immensely valuable collection of "Letters Illustrative of English History" (1826–1846); and Ambrose Poynter, father of the well-known painter, and himself a great authority on all points connected with the fine arts, especially architecture.

George Lillie Craik.

His popular biographies and other works.

Professor of English Literature at Belfast.

Sir Henry Ellis.

Ambrose Poynter.

To complete the record of Charles Knight's hard working career we may mention his other most popular production, the "Pictorial Bible," edited by Dr. John Kitto, and the "Pictorial Shakespeare," edited by himself, "Knight's Store of Knowledge for all

Knight's hard-working career.

Readers," to which as to many other collections the publisher contributed articles of his own. In 1832 Knight started with Matthew Davenport Hill the idea of a "Penny Magazine," which, upon receiving Brougham's approval, was set going and attained an extraordinary circulation. The "Penny Cyclopædia," a still more daring undertaking, was not attended with such success, and finally entailed a heavy loss upon its publisher. The Magazine maintained its popularity for a dozen years and was withdrawn when its sale declined in 1845. In the ensuing year, the Society for the Diffusion of Entertaining Knowledge, which had lately sustained some heavy losses, made its last bow to the public and retired from the stage, with the usual little address to its former patrons.

Matthew Davenport Hill.

"The Penny Magazine."

"The Penny Cyclopædia."

Brougham was apparently little moved by the fate of his unfortunate bantling, having too many other things to think of to occupy himself with so small a matter. Though by this time an old man, he had still energy to devote to his various avocations as statesman, judge, man of letters and savant. Science in particular was—next to the exercise of his judicial functions—the great delight of his latter days. The extent of his knowledge and the extraordinary variety of subjects it embraced was a wonder to all; but it seems probable that the desire to know something of every subject prevented him from giving sufficient attention to any to obtain a really thorough know-

Lord Brougham's energy in his latter days.

Lord Brougham.

ledge. He was an extraordinarily prolific writer, but none of his works have lived: perhaps the best known being his "Memoirs of the Statesmen of the Reign of George III." (1839–1843). He died in 1868 at the age of ninety. In his latter years he had been so ill-advised as to write an autobiographical work, published after his death as the "Life and Times of Lord Brougham," which has neither accuracy nor impartiality to recommend it to the reader. It is a significant fact that it was thought necessary to suppress the last volume of the "Life" as left by Brougham. Charles Knight survived his former patron for about four years, having also published in later life an autobiography, entitled, "Passages of a Working Life during Half a Century" (1813–1865).

His ill-advised autobiography.

In the same connection may be mentioned another enthusiast in the cause of popular knowledge, Dionysius Lardner (1793-1859), who is chiefly remembered by his great enterprise of the "Cabinet Cyclopædia," in which Connop Thirlwall's "History of Greece," Eyre Evans Crowe's "History of France," John Forster's "Lives of English Statesmen," and other standard works were first published.

Dionysius Lardner.

His great work, "The Cabinet Cyclopædia."

Very much the same kind of work as Brougham and his society were doing in London, was carried on about the same time with much more abiding success in Edinburgh by the brothers Chambers. William and Robert Chambers were the sons of a poor cotton-merchant in Peebles; William, who was

William and Robert Chambers.

born in 1800, being the elder by a couple of years. Their father suffered considerable loss by the introduction of the mechanical loom, which put an end to his little establishment of hand-loom weavers. A draper's shop which he opened at Peebles proved no more fortunate speculation, one of the principal causes of its failure being the generosity with which Chambers offered unlimited credit to the French prisoners in the town, none of whom ever paid him a farthing. On the failure of the shop, the Chambers family moved to Edinburgh, where Thomas Chambers obtained a situation as manager of some saltworks. His son William was apprenticed to a bookseller at a very early age; Robert, to whose education, as he had been intended for the Church, more attention was paid, attended a school in Edinburgh, and shared the garret, which was all his brother could afford to pay for out of a salary of four shillings a week. The boys, who were both born students, studied together as well as they could in the early mornings. Many curious stories are told of the shifts they were put to at this period. In the dark winter mornings study was impossible, as fire or candle were out of the question, but William was fortunate enough to strike a bargain with a baker, whereby he agreed to read to him and his two sons as they worked at the oven from five o'clock in the morning, for, and in consideration of, one hot penny

Their father's losses.

Removal of the Chambers family to Edinburgh.

Stories of their early life.

roll, fresh from the oven, not to speak of the warmth of the bakery.

In 1816 Robert left school, and after some ineffectual attempts at tuition and employment as a clerk in an office, from which he was dismissed as too stupid, set up, by his brother's advice, as a bookseller with a stall in Leith Walk, his only stock consisting of his school books and a few old volumes belonging to his family. William, when his period of apprenticeship was over, also started a stall in the same thoroughfare, and was fortunate enough to attract the interest of a good-hearted book-agent, to whom he had rendered some slight service and who trusted him with some cheap editions of standard books to the amount of £10. William also taught himself book-binding, that he might save a few pence by buying books in sheets and putting them into covers himself. He also constructed for himself a rude printing-press, and bought some worn type cheap, with which he laboriously printed an edition of the "Songs of Burns," and also a "History of the Gipsies" written by himself. Things being now in a comparatively prosperous condition, —the "Burns" having produced a profit of £9,— William and his brother Robert, who had himself done almost as well, determined to publish a magazine to be called the "Kaleidoscope," or "Edinburgh Literary Amusement," of which Robert was to be the writer, while William was to do absolutely every-

William sets up as a bookseller.

Constructs his own printing press.

First publications.

"The Kaleidoscope."

thing else connected with it, except make the paper on which it was printed. The strain however proved too great for the two lads, and after about a year of struggle, the "Kaleidoscope" disappeared.

Robert's successful start as a writer.

The bookselling business, however, prospered, and both brothers soon removed to new and better premises. Robert had also made a successful start as a writer, publishing in succession a number of works: "Illustrations of the Author of Waverley," "Traditions of Edinburgh," a book which excited the generous, ever-ready admiration of Sir Walter Scott, "Walks in Edinburgh," a collection of "Popular Rhymes of Scotland," a "History of the Rebellion of 1745," of "Rebellions in Scotland," and a "Life of James I." William produced his "Book of Scotland," in the same year, and the brothers also collaborated in a "Gazetteer of Scotland." "Chambers's Edinburgh Journal," the periodical upon which their prosperity was finally established, appeared in 1832, at first under the charge of William only, as Robert had shrunk from the risk of the undertaking, and in the same year the two brothers entered formally into partnership as the firm of W. and R. Chambers. From this time forward William and Robert fell naturally into the places most suited to their natures and to the common advantage, William taking upon himself the burden of the business management, while Robert devoted himself more entirely to literature. The publications of the Society for the Diffusion of

"Traditions of Edinburgh."

Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

Their energetic enterprise.

Useful Knowledge suggested a good and profitable example to follow. In 1833 was commenced "Chambers's Information for the People," in 1835 "Chambers's Educational Course," in 1844 a "Cyclopædia of English Literature," and in 1859 the greatest enterprise of all, "Chambers's Encylopædia," of which the first edition was completed in 1868. In his individual capacity, Robert Chambers produced anonymously a work upon the "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation," of which we shall have occasion to speak in a future chapter. Among his later books were "Ancient Sea Margins," a scientific treatise, published in 1848; the "Life and Works of Burns," 1851; the "Domestic Annals of Scotland," 1859–1861, and that curious repository of odds and ends of information, the "Book of Days," 1862-1864. Robert Chambers died in 1871, the immense labour entailed by his last work having to a great extent worn out his strength. His last years were spent at St Andrews,' the University of which had conferred upon him the degree of LL.D.

Chambers's Encyclopædia.

"Vestiges of Creation."

"The Book of Days."

Last years of Robert Chambers.

Greater honors awaited his brother William, who was twice elected Lord Provost of Edinburgh, a compliment which would have been paid to Robert also, but for the opposition excited among the most orthodox of the councillors by some expressions in the "Vestiges of Creation." Much credit attaches to the magistracy of William Chambers from the scheme which he started, or at least supported with all the

Honors conferred on William Chambers.

Restoration of St. Giles Cathedral.

weight of his official position, for the restoration of St. Giles's Cathedral, a work which was finally completed just before his death, at his sole expense. William Chambers had written little in the meantime except an account of a "Tour in Holland and the Rhine Countries," published in 1839; but the finest work of his life was the "Memoir of Robert Chambers, with Autobiographic Reminiscences," which appeared the year after his brother's death. Judging only from this work,—which is full of graphic and delightful details of a "Self-Help" more interesting and genial than anything in Mr. Smiles', and which has a special charm from the pleasant picture it gives of the brotherly love subsisting between the two rich old men as between the two penniless boys,—we are inclined to think that William Chambers would have been quite the equal of his brother, Robert, in literature, if he had followed his bent in that direction. William outlived Robert by several years, dying as late as 1883. Just before his death he was offered a baronetcy by Mr. Gladstone and accepted it, but the patent failed to reach him in time.

Receives a baronetcy.

At the time of her Majesty's accession the Chambers brothers were prosperous young publishers, in the full tide of one of their most successful ventures, the "Educational Course," to which Robert Chambers contributed some of his best work. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was also in its fullest work, and quite confident of rapid success in

the regeneration of the world. But the world itself was not greatly excited by these efforts; *il en avait bien vu d'autres.* Mr. Robert Owen was ready with a cut-and-dried plan for its instant transformation into a paradise of equality and labour; but the world only laughed and went about its business as usual in its old exasperating way. It was aware that strange things were happening, which it did not yet quite understand, in many ways. Railways had become an accepted commonplace, and steam communication with the most distant lands across the sea was proving to be not the wild legend which people in general—and the "Quarterly Review" in particular—had believed it to be—although no steam-vessel had yet ventured on a longer voyage than that between Holyhead and Dublin. But science had begun to appear distinctly a thing to be encouraged, and it was gratifying to learn from the papers that "Dr. Andrew Smith has just obtained from the Government a grant of money to enable him to publish the whole of the zoological drawings made during the late expedition into Africa. A grant for a similar purpose has also been made to Charles Darwin, Esq., who brought to this country, after his voyage in the surveying ship 'Beagle,' such an immense addition of species in different branches of zoology. This far-off presage of things to come has a strange effect upon the reader nowadays."

Robert Owen.

Government grants in aid of science.

Dr. Andrew Smith.

Charles Darwin.

Meanwhile for those that loved such subjects there

Buckland. Mantell. were the works of Professor (afterwards Dean) Buckland, and Dr. Gideon Mantell on geology, and other books on more or less scientific themes. For those who required yet more solid food there was some hope in

Whewell. the advertisement of Mr. Whewell's work upon the "Inductive Sciences." History was hardly at a premium, but there was plenty of excitement about the

The Record Commission. new Record Commission, the sixth which had been appointed since the beginning of the century, and the interesting personal question of its relations with,

Sir Francis Palgrave. and treatment of, Sir Francis Palgrave. This might induce some inquiring minds to examine the singular production of that gentleman, in the form of a kind of historical novel, on "Truths and Fictions of the Middle Ages," the object of which was to bring more clearly home to the reader the manners of a by-gone age through the impersonation of two remarkable characters, the Merchant and the Friar, —Marco Polo and Roger Bacon. There was also a

W. F. Skene. work of Mr. W. F. Skene's on the Highlanders, which was well spoken of; and if it were worth while to consider such matters at all, there was a queer, wild "History of the French Revolution," by the man who

Carlyle. was responsible for that extraordinary, undigested piece of nonsense,—Sartor Resartus, was it called? —which "Fraser's Magazine" had been somehow persuaded into printing last year. That author had

"The Athenæum" on "Sartor Resartus." got his lesson severely from the "Athenæum" of the day. "Originality of thought," said that organ, in

a pithy and decisive passage, "is unquestionably the best excuse for writing a book; originality of style is a rare and refreshing merit; but it is paying rather dear for one's whistle to qualify for obtaining it in the university of Bedlam." The whole book, it seemed, was marked by "inconsistency of thought and vagueness of expression," and such an extravagance of style as must be regarded as a "decided mark of the decadence of literature." That an unknown person like Carlyle should persist in writing after such plain speaking as this, was no doubt a curious rebellion against all the laws of criticism.

The recent interference of Parliament in matters ecclesiastical had fluttered the dove-cotes of the Church, and produced a shower of pamphlets, denouncing the iniquities of the new Commission. The Bishop of Exeter headed the attack, and a motley train of Churchmen and laymen followed in his train. The people were called upon to note the "vast enlargement of the operations of this body," and solemnly warned that "every passing year would probably be marked by some fresh accession until the country be accustomed to see it invested with attributes compared to which the highest authority over the Church claimed by the Tudors or the Stuarts would appear powerless and insignificant."

The new Commission denounced.

The recommendation of the Commission that the patronage vested in Cathedral Chapters should be transferred to the Bishop of the diocese produced

Protest against the Commission's recommendation.

another storm of remonstrance. The most loyal Churchmen, in their disgust at the proposed change, joined with others of a more secular spirit to demonstrate the unfitness of the Bishops for such a trust.

Sydney Smith.

Canon Sydney Smith related how these prelates were wont to treat the inferior clergy in a manner which none of their servants would submit to, and Mr. W.

W. S. Landor.

S. Landor, in a letter addressed to Lord Melbourne, under the signature, "A Conservative," brought even graver charges, while the gentle poet-canon,

Bowles.

Bowles, uplifted a plaintive voice of protest against the idea that any body of men exercised their patronage better than residentiary canons. The Church had its spiritual adversaries also, and ecclesiastical circles were looking forward with some interest to

J. H. Newman.

the advertised work of the Rev. J. H. Newman on Romanism and Dissent, which would no doubt prove that the only salvation lay in the Church of England. Others, however, distrusted Mr. Newman, and asserted that the last tract on the Breviary was not at all the sort of thing for a Vicar of St. Mary's to write. There was even a sort of attempt in the academic circle at Oxford to get up an opposition party of men of more moderate views, among whom a young Scotch don,

Mr. Tait.

Mr. Tait of Balliol, was prominent; but this attempt came to nothing.

The outer world, however, was as yet little excited by these commotions during a quiet and peaceful period which was not ashamed of its own medi-

ocrity. There was plenty of literature for all requirements, if it was not of the very highest class. True, a new light had appeared in the world of fiction, and the public, who had hardly done laughing at the inexhaustible fun of "Pickwick," were now chuckling over the pomposity of Mr. Bumble, and watching with awakening interest the fortunes of the Artful Dodger. Before Dickens there had been Captain Marryat and many others quite sufficiently entertaining for a not exacting age. There was Mrs. Trollope's "Vicar of Wrexhill," Miss Landon's "Ethel Churchill" and Lady Blessington's "Victims of Society," not to speak of the "Sayings and Doings" of Theodore Hook, with which the world of 1837 was mildly contented. Then there were always the Annuals to look forward to at the end of the year: the "Keepsake," and the "Christian Keepsake" of which James Montgomery was the great standby; the "Forget-me-not" with some charming little tales of Mary Howitt; "Fisher's Drawing-room Scrapbook," by L. E. L., and "Fisher's Juvenile Scrapbook," by Miss Strickland; and all the picture books, the "Flowers of Loveliness, with poetical illustrations by L. E. L.," and the "Gems of Beauty, with fanciful illustrations by the Countess of Blessington." For those who sought something more distinctly amusing there was the new "Comic Annual," lately started by Tom Hood. And among all these trifles the year 1837 produced two great

Literature abundant 1837.

"Pickwick."

"Oliver Twist."

"Vicar of Wrexhill."

"Victims of Society."

"Sayings and Doings."

The "Keepsakes."

"Scrapbooks."

Hood's "Comic Annual."

books, one generally received with all the praise that it merited, the other, which had only found a publisher with great difficulty, sneered at and cried down on every side,—John Gibson Lockhart's "Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott," and Thomas Carlyle's "History of the French Revolution."

Two great books.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE MEN WHO HAD ALREADY MADE THEIR NAME, AND ESPECIALLY OF JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART, AND OF PERIODICAL LITERATURE; OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, AND OF LEIGH HUNT.

The origin and development of periodical literature.

In order to comprehend more clearly the position and objects of the class of writers of whom we are about to speak, the work that they set before themselves and their qualifications to do it efficiently, we are obliged to go rather a long way back in the history of literature, to the time from which our modern periodical literature may be said to date. Periodicals of a kind had existed since Steele started his "Tatler," in 1709, but these were of an entirely different description, holding a sort of intermediate rank between the magazine and the weekly paper of our own day. But for the origin of the magazine as we now know it, it is not necessary to go back further than the beginning of the present century.

It is now almost exactly ninety years since the first great undertaking of the kind was launched upon the world by a small band of daring adventurers, who had neither fame nor position to recommend them to the public, nor even sympathy with the common opinions of the society in which they lived, to gain a favourable hearing. Two young Whig advocates, whose unpopular political views scared clients away from them and left them with plenty of time on their hands, conspired together with a young English clergyman—whom Fortune or Providence had cast up as a sort of jetsam on the shores of Edinburgh, when he had been trying to set forth on a humdrum professional tour in an entirely different direction—to astonish the world with a periodical of a very novel description. Francis Jeffrey, who may be regarded as the leader of the enterprise, though Sydney Smith claimed the honour of having suggested it, was a genuine Edinburgh production. Born in 1773, in one of the old houses of the Lawnmarket, the son of a clerk in the Supreme Court, he had been educated at the High School, from which he was sent to Glasgow University and afterwards for a short time to Queen's College, Oxford, but returned to study law in Edinburgh at the age of nineteen, and was called to the Scottish bar two years later, in 1794. He was among the lights of the famous "Speculative Society," to which all that was best in young Edinburgh then

The originators of the "Edinburgh Review."

Francis Jeffrey—1773–1850.

"Speculative Society."

devoted much time and thought. Brougham, the second person of the mysterious trinity who were responsible for the new "Edinburgh Review," was also a High School boy and a member of the "Speculative Society," as was also young Walter Scott, who, in spite of his Tory principles, was a frequent contributor to his friend Jeffrey's periodical. Sydney Smith, the last of the three, was an Englishman, *pur sang*, an old Wykehamist, and a Fellow of New, not to speak of his Anglican orders, which, to say the truth, do not appear, at this period at least, to have lain very heavy upon him. His own inclinations indeed had been to the bar rather than the Church, but family reasons made the latter more desirable. He had been two years curate of a small parish in Salisbury Plain, the squire of which appointed him tutor to his son, with whom he was to proceed to the University of Weimar. Germany was, however, at that time so disturbed by political convulsions that the original idea was given up, and "in stress of politics," says Sydney Smith, "we put into Edinburgh, where I remained five years." He was now a year or two over thirty, and thus the oldest of the three, Jeffrey being only twenty-nine, and Brougham not more than twenty-three.

Sydney Smith.

The first number of the "Edinburgh Review" appeared in October 1802, and immediately produced a great sensation, not only in Edinburgh, but throughout the nation. The authorship of the articles

Leading features in the "Edinburgh Review."

was kept an absolute secret, nor was it even known with any clearness from what quarter the new publication had come, except that Constable was the publisher. The great feature of the new Review was its absolute independence, previous periodicals having usually been hampered by their allegiance to some authority—occasionally a Party, but more usually a bookseller. The literary and political opinions of the "Edinburgh," however, were to be only those actually entertained by the writers. This independence naturally led to some of those attacks upon writers of established reputation—"giant-slaying," as Frederick Schlegel called it—which particularly commend themselves to the rising young men of each generation. This tendency was, however, not so marked as might have been expected; there was slaying, no doubt, but it was often of would-be giants, whose death under the scalpel of Jeffrey was more glorious than their life had ever been. The political opinions of the writers—though in Jeffrey's opinion the most important matter—were at first expressed with great moderation, so that Tories like Scott were able for some time with a clear conscience to become contributors on literary subjects. The first numbers were edited by Sydney Smith, who, however, soon resigned his post to Jeffrey, and returned to England; where, though he continued to contribute to the Review for a quarter of a century more, and gained a reputation as one of the finest

Its independence in politics.

Jeffrey assumes the editorship on Sydney Smith's return to England.

wits of his time, he resumed, with modifications, the work of his profession, and found preferment in the Church, beginning with the appointment of preacher to the Foundling Hospital, and ending thirty years later with the canonry of St. Paul's, which he retained to his death in 1845. His work can hardly be considered as coming within our province, as, though he was for the first seven years of the reign acknowledged as one of the greatest ornaments of society in London, he did little or no literary work during that time except superintending the collection of his various writings for publication as a whole. His most successful work, perhaps, was the series of "Peter Plymley's Letters" on the Catholics, published about 1806, and his connection with the "Edinburgh Review" ceased in 1828.

"Peter Plymley's Letters."

Jeffrey, the "arch-critic," as he was sometimes called, was universally looked upon as the soul of the "Edinburgh Review." His work was marked by great ability, and, we think, by a spirit of justice, or at least a desire for justice. That he made violent and bitter attacks upon authors who did not deserve his censure cannot be denied, but it is equally incontestable that he was saying what he thought was right. A striking testimony to the honesty of his intention is borne by Scott in a letter to Southey, whose "Thalaba" had been most unmercifully attacked by Jeffrey. Modern readers will perhaps think that censure was, in this case, allowable.

Jeffrey as a critic.

Scott was desirous that Southey should send something to the "Edinburgh Review" in spite of the criticism upon "Madoc" and "Thalaba." "I can assure you," he says, "upon my honour, that Jeffrey has, notwithstanding the flippancy of these articles, the most sincere respect for your person and talents. The other day I designedly led the conversation on that subject, and had the same reason I always have had to consider his attack as arising from a radical difference in point of taste, or rather feeling of poetry, but by no means from anything approaching either to enmity or a false conception of your talents." This remark appears to us to give a picture as just as kindly of the motives which animated Jeffrey's criticism. It was only a few months later that he sent his severe review of "Marmion" to Scott with a manly note, hoping that it would make no difference to their friendship, but repeating that he had spoken of the poem exactly as he thought; a statement which Scott received with his usual magnanimity, confirming his invitation to Jeffrey to dinner for the same night. Later on, however, Sir Walter considered that Jeffrey had, in criticising the former's edition of Swift, gone beyond the limit allowed to a friend reviewing a friend's work. Such a reproach would be of little importance to the frantically incorruptible Jeffrey, the bigotry of whose literary virtue would recoil from the idea that a friend's book had any claim to favourable treatment; as a rigidly

Scott and Southey.

His unsparing severity.

upright minister has been known to give office rather to an enemy than to a friend of equal merit from a terror of acting unjustly. It must be remembered, however, that Campbell was a friend of Jeffrey's, and that Jeffrey praised "Gertrude of Wyoming," a circumstance which seems to throw some doubt upon this rigid impartiality : yet something must be allowed in this case for the taste of the day. The fault that we have nowadays to find with Jeffrey is that of his extreme minuteness, the anxiety not to miss any detail, which seems to us to make him often miss the effect of the whole, and to find faults instead of beauties by his persistent habit of looking down, rather than up. This view is strangely borne out by an anonymous friend quoted by Lockhart, who met Scott and Jeffrey together and conceived an equal admiration for the conversation of both. He adds, however: "It struck me that there was this great difference—Jeffrey, for the most part, entertained us, when books were under discussion, with the detection of faults, blunders, absurdities or plagiarisms; Scott took up the matter where he left it, recalled some compensating beauty or excellence for which no credit had been allowed, and by the recitation, perhaps, of one fine stanza, set the poor victim on his legs again." Such a tendency, which is by no means uncommon among those who devote themselves wholly to criticism, might even perhaps account for the praise of "Gertrude of Wyoming,"

Thomas Campbell.

Lockhart contrasts Scott and Jeffrey.

which, though far from a great poem as a whole, may in some small matters of detail be not undeserving of commendation.

Jeffrey remained at his post as editor for thirty years. During this time he had fought down the opposition to his progress at the bar, and risen to the head of his profession, holding in succession the appointments of Dean of Faculty, Lord Advocate, and finally, Lord of Session. After his elevation to the Bench he wrote no more, but continued to take a great interest in literature, and especially in the fortunes of the "Edinburgh Review." He died in 1850. He was succeeded in his editorial functions by Macvey Napier, an old contributor, who held at the same time the various offices of Clerk of Session, Librarian to the Signet, and Professor of Conveyancing in the University of Edinburgh. Napier was a man of large and varied knowledge, and was known as having edited the seventh edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica ; but he made no particular mark in literature. He edited the "Edinburgh Review" till his death in 1847, his successor being Professor William Empson. Brougham was still to the fore as a contributor at the beginning of the reign, and had, in his usual hectoring manner, asserted a kind of authority over the whole Review, bullying the editors and harassing the contributors as during his lord chancellorship he had bullied the king and worried his fellow-ministers. Among the younger contributors were two men of

Jeffrey resigns the editorship on his elevation to the Bench.

Macvey Napier.

Prof. Empson.

Macaulay.

rising talent, of whom we shall have occasion to speak elsewhere,—Thomas Babington Macaulay, whose essay on Bacon appeared in the Review in the first year of the reign, and Thomas Carlyle.

The "Edinburgh Review" loses its supremacy.

The "Edinburgh Review," however, had long lost the lofty position it had occupied before any rival appeared in the field. The opposite side in politics was now quite as strongly represented, nor was there immunity from opposition even among the Review's own party. As far back as 1808 the first blow had been dealt at its supremacy. The Tory party, which had at first accepted the "Edinburgh Review" chiefly as a literary production, the political side of which might be ignored as long as it was managed with studious moderation, began to protest when the latter became the most conspicuous, and the Review permitted itself to be made the vehicle of extreme opinions. The popularity acquired by the able writing of Jeffrey and his supporters, and the fact that there was no other periodical of the same class in existence, made the Review a most powerful agent for the dissemination of political propaganda. It was therefore decided to start an opposition Review entirely under Tory direction, which was, like the "Edinburgh Review," to be partly political, partly literary. Sir Walter, whose private feelings had been hurt by what he thought unwarrantable criticism in the "Edinburgh," while his patriotism was revolted by an outrageous article of Brougham's upon the

affairs of Spain, readily supported the project, which also received the approval and support of Canning. The last was a matter of great importance, as it must be remembered that in those days, when newspapers were few and Parliamentary reports extremely scanty, the first intelligence of important events, and the first development of the policy of cabinets, were often communicated to the public by periodicals of this kind having relations with the great party-leaders.

The "Quarterly Review." — The new "Quarterly Review" was accordingly begun with all the strength of the opposing party. It was published in London by John Murray, the editorship being confided to William Gifford, who had previously acted as editor of the "Anti-Jacobin," and had thus been brought into constant relations with Canning. Among other distinguished supporters of the new periodical were Sir Walter Scott, Southey, George Ellis, Croker, and the Hebers. Canning, though eager in forwarding the enterprise, had little time to contribute, though he is said to have collaborated with Ellis in a humorous article on the question of bullion, which appeared in 1811, and Frere, whose assistance had also been expected, only contributed a single article. The "Quarterly" was, however, a great success, and caused much alarm to Jeffrey, who, in an interview with Scott, offered to pledge himself to exclude party politics from the "Edinburgh" should this rivalship be withdrawn.

John Murray, publisher. Edited by William Gifford.

Its distinguished supporters.

"Edinburgh" and "Quarterly" as rivals.

There were only four men whom he feared as opponents, he said, three of whom were Sir Walter himself, Southey, and Ellis. The fourth he would not name; perhaps we might suggest that he was thinking of Canning. It was certainly unfortunate for him that all these champions should be on the opposite side; but the "Edinburgh" held its own, notwithstanding all opposition. The world was proved to be wide enough for both; and Jeffrey admitted that the cause of good literature was advanced by the appearance of his adversary. Gifford undeniably proved a strong editor, showing most of the qualities and many of the defects natural to a man who had served such a literary apprenticeship as he had. He was the son of a poor glazier in a small Devonshire town, and had followed the plough himself as a lad, till, after an accident, which incapacitated him for hard work, he was led to cultivate another kind of capacity, acquired some education and began, partly by his own efforts and partly by the support of the kind friends it was his good luck to find upon his road, to raise himself in the world. He was chiefly known for two bitter satires, the "Baviad," and the "Mæviad," each of which is clever enough in its way; but it was mere butcher's work, no giant-slaying here, but a simple slaughter of the innocents. Perhaps, indeed, the poor little Della Cruscans may have got in this way more notice than would otherwise have fallen to their lot, just as a certain immor-

Gifford as a satirist and critic.

tality was conferred upon Bavius and Mævius, whom nobody would ever have heard of, if Virgil had not expressed his contempt for them. Southey said that Gifford regarded authors as Izaak Walton did worms, as unworthy of any kind of sympathy. He and Croker were supposed to be conjointly responsible for the savage attack on "Endymion," which was (falsely) said to have killed Keats; but here the natural bitterness of Gifford was no more cruel than was the impulse of the generous, kind-hearted Wilson, whose assault upon the young poet in "Blackwood's Magazine" was every whit as severe. Gifford retained the editorship in spite of failing health till 1824, when he resigned, and, after a short interregnum, during which his place was filled by John Taylor Coleridge, nephew of the poet, was succeeded by John Gibson Lockhart.

The attack on "Endymion."

Lockhart editor of the "Quarterly."

Meanwhile a new star had arisen in the north, in the original country of the "Edinburgh." In 1817 William Blackwood, the founder of the well-known publishing house of Blackwood, a man of sound common-sense and a profound insight in matters of business, determined to establish a periodical of his own. After a first unsuccessful beginning, under the united editorship of James Cleghorn and Thomas Pringle, the energetic publisher took the management entirely into his own hands—as has been invariably the case since his time, the head of the firm being always the editor of this earliest, strongest, and most

William Blackwood.

"Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine."

Cleghorn and Pringle joint editors.

The founders of "Blackwood."

permanent of monthly periodicals. He soon gathered round him a knot of the cleverest young writers in Edinburgh, and in a very short time "Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine," as it was called, held as high a position as the "Edinburgh Review" itself. A reckless band of wild wits they were, whose portraits still hang round the old saloon in George Street; the dark, keen face of Lockhart, with its finely-chiselled features and thoughtful expression; the noble presence of Wilson—he "whose going forth was comely as the greyhound, and his eyes as the lightning of fiery flame"—his handsome features lighted up with that "powerful expression of ardour and animated intelligence" which won De Quincey to him at first sight; the Ettrick Shepherd with his plaid belted round him, and his rugged, kindly face, among others of later date and perhaps lesser degree who have won their place in that Valhalla. The first and very sensational entrance upon the literary stage of the new magazine was made in a singular production called the "Chaldee Manuscript," written in a pseudo-biblical style, which hit off various prominent members of Edinburgh society, especially on the Whig side, in such a manner that everyone knew who was meant, and satirised them with a reckless dash and, we might almost say, impudence of wit, which took the city by storm. Several hands were at work upon this production. Hogg was undoubtedly the originator of the idea, but we fancy a great part of the

John Gibson Lockhart.

John Wilson.

Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd.

"The Chaldee Manuscript."

working-out depended on Lockhart and Wilson. Sir William Hamilton is said to be responsible for one verse. Sir William Hamilton.

The brilliant knot of young writers who supported Blackwood established a kind of club at Ambrose's tavern, the doings and sayings of which, real or imaginary, were chronicled by one or the other of them in the series of "Noctes Ambrosianæ," which continued for many years to form in a manner the *pièce de résistance* of each number of the magazine. "Noctes Ambrosianæ."

The choicest of these appeared between the years 1825 and 1835, when they were almost entirely the work of Wilson. John Wilson, better known perhaps by his *nom de plume* of Christopher North, was born in 1785 at Paisley, where his father owned a great gauze manufactory. His education, begun at a small school at the manse of Mearns, where he seems to have had as much chance of developing his bodily as his mental powers, was continued at Glasgow University and ended at Oxford, where he was entered as a gentleman commoner at Magdalen, and where his athletic successes almost eclipsed those of a more thoroughly academical nature. Having been left with a great command of money at his father's death, he adopted no profession, but settled down at Elleray on the banks of Windermere, where he married and devoted himself to poetry and ease, and where he attained by his first poem, the "Isle of Palms," a kind of brevet rank among the great lights of the John Wilson —"Christopher North,"— his birth and education. "The Isle of Palms."

Lake School. In 1815 the loss of the greater part of his fortune obliged him to seek more remunerative employment; he removed to Edinburgh with his family and was called to the Scottish bar, but continued to devote himself chiefly to literature, his chief work at this time being a dramatic poem descriptive of the Great Plague of 1666, called the "City of the Plague." Neither of these poems have done much for his fame. He began his more lasting work by writing for Jeffrey in the "Edinburgh," but on the reconstruction of "Blackwood," he devoted all his energies to the latter. To his genius is probably due the construction of the *mise en scène* of the "Noctes" with their few sharply drawn characters, Christopher North, Tickler, and the Shepherd—especially the latter, in whom we can only recognise a very idealised portrait of the real Shepherd, James Hogg. No doubt there may have been in that strangely mingled nature of Hogg's, with its combination of roughness and simplicity, and the delicate vein of real poetry underlying all, as much material as was required to draw upon, but the noble figure of the Shepherd in the "Noctes" seems to us to contain much more than the simple study from life could afford. The humour of the "Noctes" is as delightful as the interjected strains of a higher thoughtfulness are impressive. It is difficult for the modern reader to enter into many of the allusions which refer to incidents and persons only prominent at that particular

"The City of the Plague."

His work on "Blackwood."

time and place. But an excellent selection has been made by a younger follower of "Maga"—as the genuine Blackwoodsman loves to call his Magazine—under the title of the "Comedy of the Noctes Ambrosianæ," in which most of the gems of the series may be found.

The "Noctes" were succeeded by a series of "Dies Boreales," in progress at the commencement of our period, which were less successful. In 1842 a collection of Wilson's contributions to "Blackwood" was published under the title of the "Recreations of Christopher North;" he had also written from time to time a number of stories of varying merit. He had in 1820 been appointed Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University, though the candidate who opposed him was no less a person than Sir William Hamilton; the election was conducted entirely on party lines, and Wilson, of course, was the Tory candidate. He made, however, an excellent professor, and filled the chair with great success for more than thirty years. He died in 1854.

"Recreations of Christopher North."

Appointed Professor of Moral Philosophy.

The idea of Wilson brings before us, at the same time, that of a personage who bore very little resemblance to him, physical or mental. It must have been a singular sight that, which could often be seen on the Cumberland hills, or in the country round Edinburgh, of the athletic form of Wilson striding along with the queer little boyish figure in

its shabby clothes trotting at his heels. This strange companion was the English Opium-eater, as he was called, Thomas de Quincey, whose career had been at least as extraordinary as his appearance. He was born at Manchester in 1785,—the same year as Wilson,—and was the son of a wealthy merchant. His education was conducted in a broken, irregular sort of way, chiefly at Bath and Manchester schools, from the latter of which he ran away at seventeen, and, after reporting himself at his mother's house—his father having long been dead—commenced an extraordinary life of vagabondage, to which his family, in a kind of despair, were induced to give their sanction, even making him a small weekly allowance as long as he kept them informed of his whereabouts. After wandering over the greater part of North Wales, he suddenly disappeared from all eyes, having secretly journeyed to London, where he had some wild idea of raising money on his expectations from the Jews. The miseries of his life there are more or less told in the "Confessions of an Opium-eater," including many strange stories into which critics have thought the imagination of the writer had largely entered. De Quincey, however, always asserted that he had told nothing but the truth, though he dared not tell the whole truth about those terrible experiences. The legacy left by this period of want and misery was perceptible in the agonizing internal pains from which he

Thomas de Quincey, 1785–1859.

Birth and education.

His eccentric wanderings.

"Confessions of an Opium-eater."

suffered in later life, and which were supposed to drive him to taking laudanum—and a certain look of horror which seemed to hang about his face, and made Carlyle say, "Look at him; this child has been in Hell!" After about a year in London, De Quincey suddenly returned to his friends, by whose persuasion he went up to Oxford, as an undergraduate at Worcester, where he did little that was remarkable beyond studying German metaphysics, and beginning his pernicious habit of opium-eating, or rather laudanum-drinking. After leaving Oxford, he sought the friendship of Coleridge and Wordsworth, and finally took up his residence in the neighbourhood of the latter at Grasmere, where the next twenty years of his life were mostly spent. He assisted Coleridge in the publication called "The Friend," and was on intimate terms with all the famous Lake School; but his great ally was that Wilson of Elleray, of whom we have just been speaking, whom he had admired at a distance from the first time he saw him, as little, weak men do admire the big and strong, and whom he seems to have regarded with a sort of doglike fidelity of attachment. In 1816 he married, and should have lived a happy life but that the opium he took had begun to work out its vengeance upon him. His first real attempt in literature, passing over a year's editing of the "Westmoreland Gazette," was perhaps his most remarkable work, the "Confessions of an Opium-

"The Friend."

The Lake School.

His attachment to Wilson.

eater," which appeared in a series of papers in the "London Magazine" for 1821. The extraordinary autobiography contained in these "Confessions" loses nothing in the telling; the style of De Quincey is always refined, and his English perfect, while for the more striking qualities of the narrator we would almost say that the pictures of the wanderings of the friendless lad through the pitiless streets and his strange companionship with poor Ann of Oxford Street and her unhappy sisters are almost too powerful. The sensation excited by the "Confessions" was immense. Many critics regarded them as entirely a work of imagination, and, as we have said, it is still doubtful how much of the narrative may be genuine. De Quincey, however, always asserted it to be so, and the point can never be cleared up now.

His refined style.

Sensation excited by the "Confessions."

Contributions to the Magazines.

De Quincey continued for some years to contribute to the "London Magazine," and also found employment upon "Knight's Quarterly Magazine." At a later period Wilson had introduced him as a personage in some of the "Noctes," obtained for him the *entrée* to "Blackwood's Magazine," in which his famous paper on "Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts," appeared in February, 1827. The exquisite humour of this essay seems even more wonderful when it is contrasted with the rollicking fun of the introduction and the power of thrilling narrative shown in the appendix, which describes the

"Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts."

murders actually committed by a fiend named Williamson. The artist who could draw Toad-in-the-Hole and his companions had naturally an additional title to the consideration of Christopher North, who felt a generous pride in the success of his *protégé*. His connection with "Blackwood" being thus firmly established, De Quincey and his family moved to Edinburgh in 1830, where he continued to write for that periodical, becoming also in 1834 a contributor to "Tait's Magazine," in which appeared his further "Sketches from the Autobiography of an English Opium-eater."

"Sketches from the Autobiography of an English Opium-eater."

At the beginning of the reign De Quincey was writing in both the magazines named, and continued to do so for twelve years longer, his principal contributions to "Blackwood" being the "Suspiria de Profundis"—a sort of continuation of the "Confessions," and the "English Mail Coach," the latter containing some of the finest pices of his prose poetry. When his connection both with "Blackwood" and "Tait" was for some unexplained reason severed, he found a friend in a bookseller, named Hogg, at whose suggestion he set about a collection of his own works which occupied his time for the remainder of his life. The first volume appeared in 1853, and the fourteenth shortly after his death in 1860; two more volumes were subsequently added to complete the collection. Strange accounts are given of his latter years, which he passed chiefly in

"Suspiria de Profundis."

"The English Mail Coach."

His latter years.

a solitary lodging in Edinburgh, so as to be near his publisher. His family had lived at a cottage near Lasswade, for some time after his wife's death, but were by this time dispersed in all directions. Two of his sons were dead, the others scattered; one daughter alone remained at Lasswade, receiving her father there from time to time when the spirit moved him. De Quincey survived Wilson by five years, dying in December, 1859.

John Gibson Lockhart 1794–1854.

Hogg, who died a couple of years before the Queen's accession, does not belong to our period. The remaining member of the little society which made the glory of Edinburgh Tory circles in those early days was in some sense the most important of the party. Though his writings, with one exception, are not numbered among the classics of our literature, like those of De Quincey—though in power of thought and expression he was perhaps never the equal of Wilson, none of that brilliant company displayed a greater versatility of genius, none certainly attained a higher position in the world of literature or extended their influence over a wider sphere than John Gibson Lockhart. Shrewd and brilliant, and—in spite of the bitter wit which gained him in his youth the name of the "scorpion"—liberal in his criticism, powerful and versatile in fiction, and no mean master of the art of verse, Lockhart would be deserving of a high place among the writers of his day, even without the greatest

His versatility of genius and high position in literature.

"The scorpion."

work of his life; but as the biographer of Sir Walter, humanity owes him a debt greater than to any of his contemporaries. The whole civilised world has come at one time or another under the magical influence of Scott, and has followed and wondered and admired a leader whose influence is perhaps only less universal than that of Shakespeare; it was left for Lockhart to strengthen and enlarge the sphere of that influence by showing the world that among the noblest works of the great enchanter there was none so great and noble as himself. Only one age could be privileged to stand by and witness the triumphs and struggles of that splendid life, and that only with the imperfect and confused insight of contemporaries, swayed and biassed by a hundred transient motives of petty prejudice or partisanship. In Lockhart's masterly delineation, worked out apparently without art or effort, only with a loving care that no detail should be lost, no feature blurred or concealed, the man as he was in life stands forth to all time. There is no one of us but may pass what time he pleases as the sharer of his walks or his studies in the grounds of Abbotsford or the study in Castle Street; and no man surely can return to the ordinary work of his life without being the better for the pure influence of that high companionship. In reward for such a work as this we could hardly give too high a place to the writer.

His masterly delineation of Scott.

John Gibson Lockhart was born in 1794, at Cam-

His family and education.

busnethan, where his father, a cadet of an ancient and honourable family, the Lockharts of Milton-Lockhart, was minister. His mother was the daughter of a well-known Edinburgh minister, the Rev. John Gibson of St. Cuthbert's, so that he, though in later years not much resembling this characteristic origin, was one of the many "Sons of the Manse" who have illustrated Scottish history. His father being appointed minister of the Blackfriars Church in Glasgow, he was educated at the High School and University of that city, from which he proceeded to Oxford through the medium of one of the Snell exhibitions open to Glasgow students at Balliol. Lockhart's youth seems to have been chiefly marked by an irrepressible tendency to caricature everybody he came across, especially his pastors and masters, and by a very strong turn for modern languages. In French, German, Italian, and even Spanish literature, he was as well versed on leaving college at nineteen—where he took a first-class, though most of his time in the examination was spent as usual in caricaturing the examiners—as most men expect to be with the reading of a life-time. He spent a year or so in travelling in Germany, paying his expenses by a translation of Friedrich Schlegel's "Lectures on the Study of History," and returned to Edinburgh to study for the Scottish bar, to which he was called in 1816. He does not seem to have had much success as an advocate, but found a more congenial field in

A caricaturist.

Knowledge of foreign literature.

Studies for the Bar.

literature, being, as we have already seen, one of the original staff of "Blackwood." In the famous "Manuscript," Lockhart is described as "the scorpion from a far country,"—which is presumably Chaldee for Lanarkshire—"which delighteth to sting the faces of men," and his mission, which he certainly discharged very thoroughly, was to "sting sorely the countenance of the man which is crafty" (Constable), "and of the two beasts," *i. e.*, Cleghorn, the "bear," and Pringle, the "lamb," who had now become editors of Constable's "Scots Magazine." Polemics, however, were by no means his only, though perhaps at this time his strongest, point; for we believe that to many of the sharpest articles in the "Noctes," it was Lockhart that contributed the salt and pepper. His literary articles showed wide reading, and, in general, sound scholarly criticism, and he did good service as the champion of Wordsworth and Coleridge against the attacks of the "Edinburgh Review." About this time, also, his "Spanish Ballads" began to appear in Blackwood. We cannot perhaps give any very high praise to these productions, which, however, had a great reputation in their day, but they are never without spirit, and contain some stirring passages. In 1818 one of the greatest events of Lockhart's life occurred, his presentation to Walter Scott, then at the very zenith of renown and success with no *arrière-pensée* to detract from his happiness. A characteristic

His stinging criticisms.

Defends Wordsworth and Coleridge.

"Spanish Ballads."

Introduced to Sir Walter Scott.

result of a conversation by which Scott was pleased and interested in his young acquaintance was a note from the Ballantynes, a few days after, saying that as Mr. Scott found little time now to supply the historical department for their "Edinburgh Annual Register," it would be "acceptable to him as well as to them," if Lockhart would undertake it—a very pleasant windfall for a young *littérateur*.

Becomes Scott's son-in-law. 1820.

Lockhart's intimacy with Sir Walter grew apace, and was soon made more binding by his attachment to Sophia Scott, whom he married in 1820. From this time forth he was his father-in-law's right hand man, behaving towards him in all respects as an affectionate son. His literary work had been continued with great success meanwhile. In 1819 he published an extraordinary *jeu d'esprit* entitled "Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk," which purported to reproduce the impressions of Dr. Peter Morris, a Welsh physician, travelling in Scotland and entertaining his relatives with amusing and outspoken comments on everything and everyone he saw. These were by no means gratifying to the Edinburgh society, which found itself satirised with considerable freedom, and Lockhart himself seems in after days to have been rather ashamed of his joke; but Scott was immensely amused by it and thought many of the comments very just, so that the author cared little for other criticism. "Peter's Letters" may be regarded as a kind of farewell to the reckless humour

"Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk."

of Lockhart's younger days. After his marriage he attempted more serious work, his four novels being published in the four ensuing years, "Valerius, a Roman Story," in 1821; "Adam Blair," in 1822; "Reginald Dalton," in 1823," and "Matthew Wald," in 1824. These are of varying merit, the greatest praise being certainly due to the very powerful and intensely painful tragedy of "Adam Blair," in which, what we should call in spite of the wild mirth of early days, the natural melancholy of Lockhart's genius has full scope. "Reginald Dalton" is a work of an entirely different description, a tale of college life chiefly, full of liveliness and dash with an occasional touch of intense pathos to temper it. The famous scene of the flight over the shifting sands of Holland would in itself give life to the dullest book. "Valerius" is one of many praiseworthy efforts, made at various times by various persons, to cause dry bones to live, and is not much above or beneath the level of most efforts of the kind. In 1826 Lockhart was appointed to the important post of editor of the "Quarterly Review." He still, however, kept up his relations with Edinburgh, and besides contributing to "Blackwood," supplied a sympathetic "Life of Burns," full of good judgment and good feeling, which still holds its ground as the best account of the poet, to Constable's "Miscellany." Murray was about this time starting a series entitled the "Family Library," intended to rival Charles

"Valerius, a Roman Story."

"Adam Blair."

"Reginald Dalton."

"Matthew Wald."

Becomes editor of the "Quarterly Review," 1826.

Knight's "Library of Entertaining Knowledge;" Lockhart was chosen to superintend its production, and led the way himself with a "Life of Napoleon."

At the height of his reputation.

He was at this time at the height of his literary reputation; perhaps his private happiness was a little less complete since he had, for the time, to give up Chiefswood, the cottage near Abbotsford where Sir Walter was wont to drop in at all hours, lightening up the whole place with his cheery presence. Lockhart's position at the head of the "Quarterly" was one that exactly suited him, and rarely has a review had a more brilliant editor. But heavy troubles were awaiting him. Sir Walter was beginning to show signs of exhaustion, consequent on the grand fight he was maintaining against his pecuniary embarrassments, and in a few years became a confirmed invalid. In 1831 died John Hugh Lockhart, the "Hugh Littlejohn" of the "Tales of a Grandfather," and the next year came the great calamity of Sir Walter's death. Anne Scott followed him in 1833. The old, happy circle was thus much narrowed. From the time of his father-in-law's death, Lockhart devoted himself to the duty reserved for him as the literary executor of Sir Walter, that is, of preparing that biography of which we have already spoken. The difficulties of his task, especially as regards the journal of Sir Walter, are expressed in a letter to Crocker, nearly twenty years later. Besides many other views, he says:

Heavy family troubles.—Death of his son John Hugh.

The death of Sir Walter Scott.

Preparation of Sir Walter's biography.

"Scott clearly and indeed avowedly considered himself as writing what would one day be published. In his will he distinctly directs what shall be done with the money that his executors shall obtain in respect to this and other manuscripts. But he would never have considered himself as writing a diary that could be published *in extenso* during the life of anyone whom he cared for . . . Greatly feeling the responsibility imposed upon me, in selecting for publication within a few years after his death, I had the whole of his diary set into type, in order that I might obtain the advice throughout of his most intimate friend, Mr. Morritt, and another person who knew very little of him but a good deal of society and all literary questions—Milman. Three copies were struck off, and I now have them all, and I have no doubt that in course of time some heir of his will sell the complete diary for a larger sum than my book brought for the relief of his immediate representative as succeeding to an over-burdened estate . . . Trusting to such intervention, both diarists" (Scott and Moore, whose memoirs edited by Lord John Russell, were under discussion) "absolved themselves from any very strict watch over their pens —set down much which the whim, or very often the laziness of the hour could alone account for . . . Posterity will know that I at least endeavoured to avoid the offending of Scott's surviving contemporaries, and you will not doubt that I had to spare Tories about as often as Whigs the castigation of diarizing Malagrowther."

"Life of Sir Walter Scott."

The first volume of the "Life of Sir Walter Scott" appeared the beginning of 1837, and the seventh and last in May 1838. In the course of its publication a great grief fell upon the author through the death of his wife, but, with the noble example of the subject of his biography before him, the bereaved husband never flagged in his work. We have already spoken of the merits of this great work, which appears to us of more value as the real presentment of a great life, free from all fictitious adornment, such as literary

Death of Mrs. Lockhart.

biographers are wont to lavish upon their subjects, and yet living and moving with almost the very breath of life. We have only to add a word upon the disinterested and at the same time able manner in which the biographer has effaced himself, great as was his own part in many of the scenes which he recounts, to prevent any possible obstruction of the view of the principal subject; though at the same time he is always anxious to do full justice to any other person who was so fortunate as to be prominently connected with Sir Walter. We seem to know Sir Adam Fergusson as well as Scott himself; Laidlaw and Tom Purdie and the Ballantynes are distinct and living figures, and many of lesser importance are almost as clear, the author alone being discreetly withdrawn unless his presence is needed to make clearer or more life-like the scenes in which he takes part.

His devotion to the work.

Lockhart continued to edit the "Quarterly" for the first fifteen years of her Majesty's reign with equal success, if perhaps with diminished ardour. In 1852 his son Walter died, and his death was a heavy blow to his father. In the ensuing year, Lockhart resigned his post on the "Quarterly" and retired broken-hearted to Abbotsford, then rented, and afterwards owned by his daughter, and her husband, James Robert Hope, a Parliamentary barrister of high reputation. About a year later he died at the age of sixty, some six months later than his old friend

Death of his son Walter

Lockhart retires from the "Quarterly."

His death.

John Gibson Lockhart.

Wilson, and was buried at the feet of Sir Walter in Dryburgh Abbey.

We cannot take leave of the brilliant editor of the "Quarterly Review" without a glance at some of his contributors. Chief among these was one who had aided in setting up the "Review," and who continued to be one of its most industrious writers after, as before, the time of Lockhart. John Wilson Croker was an Irishman born and bred, but had long turned his back on the too limited sphere of his native country. Born at Galway in 1784, a schoolfellow of Tom Moore at Portarlington, and a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, we hear of him in his youth as amusing Dublin society with much the same kind of squibs and satires with which Wilson and Lockhart astonished the people of Edinburgh. In 1807 he was returned to Parliament for Downpatrick, and in the same year brought himself before the London public by a masterly pamphlet on the Catholic question, entitled "A Sketch of Ireland, Past and Present." In 1809 he published a poem on the battle of "Talavera," which received much praise not only from literary critics, but also from the Duke of Wellington and various great personages upon whom rested his hopes of political advancement. He was appointed Secretary to the Admiralty in the same year, a post which he retained with great credit for more than twenty years, steadily refusing promotion. He had joined heartily with his friend Canning in the

John Wilson Croker, 1784–1857.

Secretary to the Admiralty.

project of the "Quarterly Review," and it is said that, with the exception of a period of five years, from 1826 to 1831, there was not a number from 1811 to 1856 which did not contain at least one article by Croker. His criticisms were too often marked by a peculiar acrimony, which was attributed to personal spite or revenge for satire directed against himself; but we believe this to be a mistake, as Croker appears to have been singularly insensible to adverse criticism. His review of Macaulay's History was undoubtedly an act of vengeance to which he had looked forward, but it must be remenbered that Macaulay had treated Croker's edition of Boswell with such an unmerciful flaying as even an eel would cry out against. Macaulay and Croker had many duels in Parliament, in which the brilliant orator, whose arguments often had many weak points for a watchful enemy to seize upon, did not always come off a victor. Croker was also unmercifully satirised by Disraeli under the character of Rigby in "Coningsby," but he does not seem to have ever seen this attack until long after he was supposed to have answered it. He was the conscientious and painstaking editor of many valuable papers, including the "Memoirs of the Embassy of Marshal de Bassompierre to the Court of England in 1626" (1819), the "Suffolk Papers" (1823), "Horace Walpole's Letters to Lord Hertford" (1824), etc., etc. His edition of Boswell is chiefly known from Macaulay's criticism.

His criticisms peculiarly bitter.

His work as editor.

He died in 1857, his last published work being a reprint from the "Quarterly" of "Essays on the Early Period of the French Revolution," of which period Croker was commonly supposed to know more than any other Englishman living.

Abraham Hayward, 1801–1884.

A newer recruit, whose articles added greatly to the readable qualities of the "Quarterly Review," made his first appearance in 1836 with an article upon a gastronomical work called the "Original" by Mr. Walker, a London police magistrate. Abraham Hayward was born near Salisbury in 1801 and educated at Peter Blundell's famous school at Tiverton. He was originally articled to a solicitor, but abandoned that profession for the bar, to which he was called in 1832. In 1828 he set up, together with W. F. Cornish, a periodical called the "Law Magazine, or Quarterly Review of Jurisprudence," which speedily achieved a high position and brought to Hayward, who became sole editor after the fourth number, a great reputation, especially among foreign lawyers and law-writers. In 1833 he produced a prose translation of Goethe's Faust, which brought him into notice in the literary world. The article on the "Original," mentioned above, with another on a kindred subject, were much approved and were republished some fifteen years later in a little book under the title of the "Art of Dining;" no other essay of his achieved such a success, unless it be the famous "Pearls and Mock Pearls of History," in

"Law Magazine, or Quarterly Review of Jurisprudence."

the "Quarterly" of April, 1861. We have classed him as a "Quarterly" reviewer, but he wrote also in the "Edinburgh," "Fraser," and other periodicals.

As a Magazine writer.

His principal subjects were law, German literature, the letters of Junius, and gastronomy. On the last subject he writes with a combination of earnestness, sound judgment and artistic enthusiasm, which makes the sympathetic reader exclaim, "Here is indeed a man and a brother!" His principal fault as a writer is that he is too conversational; his anecdotes are pleasant and his style chatty, but too disjointed for a literary production. One feels that it would be so much pleasanter to hear *viva voce* than to read. In 1844 Hayward was made a Q. C., presumably as an able writer on legal questions, for his success as a barrister had not been great. In 1847 he produced for private circulation a volume of "Verses of other Days," which did not increase his reputation. Besides the magazines, Hayward wrote a good deal in the "Times" and other newspapers,

As a journalist.

his most noted journalistic efforts being those in which he fought the battle of the Government in the "Morning Chronicle" against the charges of neglecting the army in the Crimea, brought by the "Times." His principal reputation, however, was due at all times to his unrivalled powers of conversation. He died in 1884.

The "Edinburgh" and "Quarterly" Reviews were respectively the organs of the Whig and Tory parties,

supported by the party leaders and generally accepted by the rank and file. There was, however, as there usually is, an advanced section of the more progressive party to whom the one was almost as odious as the other. To the group which gathered round Jeremy Bentham, headed by that sternest of philosophical disciples, James Mill, it appeared advisable to start a periodical on their own lines, and thus a new rival to the "Edinburgh" arose out of its own camp in the year 1823. The new organ of the philosophical radicals, as their party was called, was entitled the "Westminster Review," and its editorship, after being refused by Mill on the ground of his official duties at the India House, was confided to John Bowring, a gentleman of good family, born at Exeter in 1792, and chiefly known for his great linguistic powers, exemplified in his "Specimens of Russian Poetry," and as the subject of a recent most unwarrantable arrest and imprisonment at the hands of the government of Louis XVIII. in France. A literary review projected at the same time by Henry Southern, a journalist of some eminence, formerly editor of the "Retrospective Review," and later on of the "London Magazine," was merged into the greater undertaking, and Southern became joint editor of the "Westminster Review," attending to the literary portion of the work while Bowring, an enthusiastic disciple of Bentham's, and later his literary executor, managed the political department.

The "Westminster Review," edited by John Bowring.

Southern joint editor.

The firm of Longman, "our fathers in the Row," refused to publish the Review, on seeing the prospectus prepared by James Mill, in which the position of the new Radicals was set forth, as opposed to the Whig and Tory divisions of the governing body, neither of whom was said to have the slightest care for, or interest in, the people; but another publisher was soon found, and the new venture was started with great vigour. Bowring, though ostensibly the political editor, was too much a man of letters not to distinguish himself in the other department also, to which he contributed many valuable articles upon foreign literature. His extraordinarily wide range of knowledge on the subject is proved by the volumes of translations and selections from Russian, Dutch, Spanish, Polish, Hungarian, Bohemian, and Servian literature, published at various periods from 1821 to 1832, and supplemented at later dates.

Bowring's wide range of knowledge.

Bowring was an ardent reformer, and did good service, especially in the cause of free trade, on which subject he had gathered a great store of knowledge in the course of several commercial missions on which he was sent by the Government to France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Prussia, and Turkey. He was one of the founders of the Anti-Corn Law League, established under the leadership of Cobden at the York Hotel, Manchester, in 1838. Bowring sat in Parliament from 1835 to 1837, and from 1841

An ardent Reformer.

to 1849. He afterwards became H. B. M's consul at Canton, and in 1854 was appointed plenipotentiary to China, as well as to the courts of Japan, Siam, etc., and Governor of Hong Kong, all of which posts he filled with great vigour and ability, for which he was rewarded with the honour of knighthood. Among his later works were the "Kingdom and People of Siam" (1857), "Siam and the Siamese" (1866), and some translations from Chinese literature. He had formed in early life a gigantic scheme for a history, with selections of the popular poetry of the world, and had prepared quantities of material and secured the co-operation of eminent men of letters in many countries, but the work was too vast to be ever completed. He died in 1872. Among many able contributors to the "Westminster Review," under Bowring's editorship, we can find none more brilliant than the young John Stuart Mill, then a clerk under his father in the India House, who became joint editor of the magazine in 1835. A fuller account will be given of him in a succeeding chapter.

"Kingdom and People of Siam" (1857).

"Siam and the Siamese" (1866).

Among the smaller magazines had also arisen one which bade fair to dispute the supremacy of "Blackwood." In 1830 Hugh Fraser and William Maginn combined with a namesake of the former, James Fraser, the publisher, to start a periodical to be called after one of its editors, "Fraser's Magazine."

"Fraser's Magazine."

Dr. Maginn, the real head of the enterprise, and a man of very remarkable ability, had got his chief

Dr. Maginn, 1794–1842.

literary experience in the very magazine which he now wished to attack. Born at Cork in 1794, the son of a local schoolmaster, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin, from which he received in 1818 the degree of LL.D., Maginn was at first a teacher in his father's school, but afterwards devoted himself to literature, and was a frequent contributor to "Blackwood," under various pseudonyms. His writing was easy and spirited and showed signs of scholarship as well as natural capacity, but the license of attack which he allowed himself was almost greater than even the iconoclasts of that day approved, and his irregular habits made him a troublesome contributor to deal with. In 1823 he married and came to London, where he found employment on the "John Bull" newspaper and was afterwards foreign editor of the "Representative." His contributions to the new magazine were remarkable for their wit and power, but disgusted many by the scurrilousness of the personal attacks which appeared in "Fraser."

Among the contributors he gathered round him were his countryman Mahoney, Carlyle, Thackeray, Peacock, and many another well-known name, of most of whom we shall have to speak in due time and place. Francis Mahoney, or O'Mahoney, born in 1805, began life as a priest in Ireland, but having while still in early life abandoned, or been abandoned by, the heads of that sacred profession, first made himself known to the world in the very different atmos-

Francis Mahoney (Father Prout), 1805–1866.

phere of those revels—which, in imitation of the "Noctes" of "Blackwood," were a kind of pretended necessity of every literary undertaking,—among the lively, somewhat riotous and somewhat profane crew of "Fraser." Mahoney called himself "Father Prout," the Friar Tuck of the jovial company, and his sketches had some success in their time, though not so much as his songs, one of which, that which tells of

"The Bells of Shandon."

> "The Bells of Shandon
> That sound so grand on
> The shining waters
> Of the river Lee,"

had something of the social glory which Moore before and Lover after him gained by their own singing of what was perhaps not very elevated in poetry. Mahoney had also a wonderful gift of Macaronic verse, which he could knock off as well in Latin as English, and which formed a chief point of the Watergrasshill papers in "Fraser." He died in Paris in 1866, forlorn and poor, but still possessing something of the sparkle and charm of former days.

His gift of Macaronic Verse.

Maginn's career was cut short much sooner. His reckless manner of living had ruined him both in health and pocket, and in the last two years of life he was repeatedly arrested for debt, and was finally obliged to "go through the court," as the phrase was, *i. e.*, take advantage of the Act for the Relief of

Insolvent Debtors. He thus obtained his liberty in 1842, but he never recovered the disgrace of the proceedings, and died in the same year at the age of thirty-eight. His only complete work appears to have been a political novel entitled "Whitehall," published in 1827. Among other literary work, he collaborated with his friend and countryman, Thomas Crofton Croker (1798–1854), author of several works on the popular songs and folk-lore of his native country, in re-writing the latter's well-known "Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland," of which the original manuscript had been lost. We do not know how much Maginn or anyone else may have contributed to this work, but Croker was too modest to allow his own name to appear on the title-page when it was published, though undoubtedly responsible for the principal part of it.

Thomas Crofton Croker, 1798–1854.

"Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland,"

So far, strangely enough, almost all the wits and satirical writers we have had to chronicle have been of either Scotch or Irish extraction. The countrymen of Sydney Smith, however, were by no means ill represented in this development of literature. Among the most popular figures in London society at the commencement of the reign none were in greater request than the pair of brothers whose chief title to notice, next to their great social gifts, was the memory of that matchless piece of pure, unalloyed, unmalicious fun which was still remembered

The early humourists of the Victorian age.

after five and twenty years had gone by, the "Rejected Addresses." James and Horace Smith were no longer young, the former being a little over and the latter a little under sixty years of age. James, who had written nothing since the "Addresses" but some dramatic sketches for Charles Matthews, died in 1839, but Horace survived him for ten years, and wrote several novels in the reign of Victoria, none of which can be said to have lived. If any of his stories be remembered now, it is probably "Brambletye Hall," published in 1826, and that could have little more than an archæological interest.

The "Rejected Addresses." James and Horace Smith.

Of a very different character was another leading English humourist of the day, who comes more properly within the scope of this chapter through his connection with periodical literature, the reckless Yorick, who was wont to set the tables in a roar with his boisterous fun, or keep a company sitting half the night entranced while he sat at the piano and improvised musical sketches and stories without pause or effort. Theodore Edward Hook, son of the Vauxhall organist and well-known composer, James Hook, was a true son of London, born in Charlotte Street, Bedford Square, in 1788. In his youth he distinguished himself by writing some clever farces and perpetrating some astonishing practical jokes on a gigantic scale. His social talents attracted the notice of the Prince Regent, who appointed him to

Theodore Edward Hook, 1788-1841.

the lucrative post of Accountant-General of Mauritius, a curious promotion for a man whose one merit was that he was such good company. Hook, however, went to the Mauritius, enjoyed himself greatly, and, after muddling his accounts to an unheard-of degree, found himself responsible for the defalcations of his subordinates to the amount of twelve thousand pounds. Though he was cleared of any complicity in the matter on his return to England, the civil responsibility still lay upon him; his property was seized and he himself imprisoned for two years, though it was finally decided that the Crown claims should not be put into force during his life-time. Meanwhile he had begun to use his pen, and a satire upon Queen Caroline earned him the editorship of the "John Bull," a newspaper set on foot in 1820, especially to vilify that unhappy woman. It was rather dirty work, but Hook did it well, and perhaps served the community on the whole. Unfortunately the subject of his sarcasm died in 1821, and the "John Bull's" occupation was gone. Between 1826 and 1838 he wrote a number of ephemeral novels, of which "Gilbert Gurney" was perhaps the most successful. In 1836 he was appointed editor of Colburn's "New Monthly Magazine." The latter years of his life were spent in an unhealthy atmosphere; his great social powers were debased by the position he had sunk to as the parasite of great patrons. It was the fashion of his contemporaries to

At the Mauritius.

Editor of Colburn's "New Monthly Magazine."

profess to regard him as merely Lord Hertford's jester, in which character he was bitterly satirised by Thackeray and Disraeli as the Wagg of "Pendennis," and the Lucian Gay of "Coningsby." Through all this period of professional buffoonery, the weight of that immense, unredeemable debt lay on his mind; domestic sorrows were not wanting to add to his troubles, and his health was ruined by the life that he led. He died in 1841, "done up in purse, in mind, and in body," as he said himself. His effects were immediately seized by the Crown in partial satisfaction of his liabilities, and his family could only be provided for by a subscription, on which the names of his great patrons were conspicuous by their absence.

His distress and death.

Hook's literary friends were not untrue to him; and Lockhart paid, in the "Quarterly," a powerful tribute to all the possibilities of good that exist in him, and all the better qualities he had shown. One of his truest friends, who afterwards became his biographer, was the famous "Tom of Ingoldsby." Richard Harris Barham was born at Canterbury in 1788, and educated at St. Paul's School and Brasenose College. Ordained in 1813, he had held various livings with credit, and was the incumbent of a London parish, and priest in ordinary of the Chapel Royal, when he first became known in literature. His early attempts, which included two novels, were not successful, and, indeed, Barham would probably never have been

Richard Harris Barham, 1788–1845.

known to posterity had he not been induced, when his old schoolfellow, Richard Bentley, started his "Miscellany" in 1837, under the conduct of Charles Dickens, to contribute some jocular pieces, both in verse and prose, to that new periodical. These contributions formed the nucleus of the "Ingoldsby Legends." They were received with general approval, and he continued them during several years, many appearing in "Bentley's Miscellany," and some in the "New Monthly," then edited by Hook. Their popularity has never since flagged, and it must be admitted that they are of the best of their kind, of whatever value that kind may be. Barham died in 1845, as one might say in the odour of sanctity, for he continued to receive ecclesiastical preferment after, as well as before, the publication of the "Ingoldsby Legends."

The "Ingoldsby Legends."

Of a very different class to those of whom we have been speaking was another writer who, at the Queen's accession, had reached the very zenith of his literary power,—we would say of his fame also, if that word could be fitly applied to one who, while he excited unbounded admiration among a small circle, was never clearly discerned by the outer world. The great and varied talents of Walter Savage Landor must entitle him to a high place in literature, but it is extremely difficult to select the place which should be allotted to him, both from the singularity of his genius, and also from the fact that during the whole

Walter Savage Landor 1775–1864.

His place in literature.

sixty-five years of his indefatigable literary career, we hardly come upon one work of his which may be regarded as entering into competition with any other production of the day. In fact, except in a few cases of publications devoted to some emergency of the moment, such as the address to the Italian people on "Representative Government," Landor wrote rather for himself than for any audience. That there would be a select few by whom his writings would be ardently welcomed, Landor hoped and believed, but that they should be appreciated by the world at large he neither expected nor desired. The common herd—that is, not the lower classes, dignified by Mr. Gladstone with the title of "masses," but the everyday world, Brown, Jones and Robinson, the passers-by in the street or the men at the Club—were regarded in his mind with indifference or disgust. We find ample evidence of this feeling in his dialogues; Barrow speaks with horror and contempt of popularity, and Anaxagoras bids Aspasia remember that he lived and died apart from other men. It is a narrow view to take at best, and a very mischievous doctrine when it finds disciples; for every generation sees thousands of its young men impelled by the sheer delusion that they are not as others to make much greater fools of themselves than Nature originally intended them to do. Nor is the world slow to accept a defiance of this kind. With a few exceptions of men of immense genius, he who neglects

His writings only for the cultured few.

A mischievous doctrine.

the approval of the world fails to command its attention. So it is that, though Landor still has, and perhaps more now than formerly, a circle of admirers who have a real appreciation of his genius—augmented perhaps by some who think that to praise him is a mark of superior discernment—to the world at large he remains an indistinct figure, and those who do not know him better than anybody else, know little more of him than his name.

His birth and education.

Walter Savage Landor was born in 1775, of an old Staffordshire family, well-descended also through his mother, one of the Savages of Tachbrook in Warwickshire. He was educated at Rugby and Trinity College, Oxford, where he distinguished himself by his ability and scholarship and many pranks, harmless enough in themselves—mere indications of the bold, masterful spirit, impatient of any kind of control which he showed throughout life—but which hardly commended themselves to those in authority. Few old Rugbeians would be scandalised at the story of how, being detected by a farmer in the fascinating pursuit—always popular at that venerable seat of learning—of water-poaching, he threw his cast-net over his captor and held him captive in his turn. From Oxford he was sent down for having in a frolic fired a charge of shot into his neighbour's windows. Landor was then, as the undergraduates whispered to each other with a kind of awe, a red republican in politics, and his neighbour was a Tory,

His pranks at Rugby and Oxford.

and was entertaining a party "consisting of servitors" (poor scholars) "and other raffs of every description," whom this leveller regarded with the most aristocratic contempt. On leaving the University, Landor immediately rushed into print with his first volume of "Poems," a collection of English and Latin pieces of little mark, published in 1795. In the same year also appeared a satirical "Moral Epistle," addressed to Lord Stanhope on the iniquities of Pitt. His next few years were chiefly occupied by poetical studies, quarrels with his family, and flirtations, an amusement to which in his early days Landor was particularly addicted. In 1798 appeared his epic poem of "Gebir," which attracted no attention at the time; indeed, considering the trouble that Landor took to secure obscurity for it, publishing it anonymously in pamphlet form through a Warwick bookseller, it is surprising that it was ever heard of at all. Southey, however, praised it loudly both among his friends and in the "Critical Review," and Shelley, Lamb, and De Quincey were all among its admirers. It is certainly a remarkable production, the lines often majestic, the language and diction always refined and the whole structure imposing, but to our mind somewhat stiff and motionless, and imparting rather a sense of fatigue to the reader, not from dulness but severity. Disgusted at the failure of "Gebir," Landor made an experiment in journalism, on the staff of the Foxite "Courier," but it was

His first volume. "Poems," 1795.

"Gebir," 1798.

not successful. The fact was he could not be trusted to run in harness; as long as he was given his head, and allowed to denounce Pitt to his heart's content, all was well, but when it was desired to guide him steadily along a particular political path, he became unmanageable. In 1800 he published some "Poems from the Arabic and Persian," and in 1802 a volume of "Poetry by the author of 'Gebir,'" containing the fine poem of "Chrysaor," perhaps the greatest of his efforts in heroic verse.

"Chrysaor."

On his father's death in 1805, Landor found himself master of a considerable fortune. He now settled for some time at Bath, where he went much into society,—where his great natural gifts of mind and person made him generally welcome, his notorious republican views perhaps adding a little piquancy to his popularity,—bought many bad pictures, as was his wont, and otherwise fulfilled the duties of a gentleman of property. In 1808 a sudden start of enthusiasm sent him off to Spain—then just preparing to resist the unwarrantable invasion of Napoleon—where he raised and equipped a thousand volunteers at his own cost, marched them to the front and would probably have done good service had he not been hampered by the incapacity of the Spanish commander, Blake. On his return to England, he purchased at enormous expense—selling for the purpose his Staffordshire estate and his mother's inheritance of Tachbrook—a large property at

His notorious republicanism.

Llanthony in South Wales, where he proposed to spend a happy and useful life as a country gentleman, improving the condition of the land and of the people, planting trees—his favourite occupation next to buying pictures—and disseminating virtue and prosperity generally over the landscape. To increase his happiness, he married with his usual impetuosity a Miss Thuillier, daughter of a Swiss banker at Banbury, a pretty, frivolous girl who caught his fancy at a dance. His project scarcely turned out successfully; in two or three years he had managed to quarrel with the Bishop of the diocese, the Lord Lieutenant of the county, his brother country gentlemen who sat with him on the grand jury, and most fiercely of all, with his own tenantry. Nor were his domestic relations any happier. His wife had no sympathy with his tastes and disliked the solitude of Llanthony. Vexatious lawsuits were brought against him by his tenants, and local attorneys set upon the rash, impetuous gentleman as their natural prey. Some of these he satirised in Latin verses, others he thrashed, and had to pay them damages. Utterly disheartened and disgusted with mankind, almost ruined in fortune, and separated even from his wife, he retired in 1814 to France to begin a long residence abroad.

His marriage.

His unhappy life.

In 1812 he had published his tragedy of "Count Julian," a work marked by most of the same qualities and defects which are found in "Gebir." The style

"Count Julian," 1812.

is more mature, and the versification perhaps more agreeable, but the characters, though they now speak for themselves, are stiffer than before; they seem fitter for the Greek stage, to attain artificial stature on a buskin, and intone through the *porte voix* of a tragic mask the majestic lines assigned to them. There are, however, some beautiful bits of description, inspired by Landor's own Spanish experiences, from one of which we venture to quote a few lines :—

> "If strength be wanted for security,
> Mountains the guard, forbidding all approach
> With iron-pointed and uplifted gates,
> Thou wilt be welcome, too, in Aguilar,
> Impenetrable, marble-turreted,
> Surveying from aloft the limpid ford,
> The massive fane, the sylvan avenue;
> Whose hospitality I proved myself,
> A willing leader in no impious war
> When fame and freedom urged me; or mayest dwell
> In Reynosa's dry and thriftless dale
> Unharvested beneath October moons,
> Among those frank and cordial villagers."

Commentary on Memoirs of Mr. Fox.

In the same year appeared his singular "Commentary on Memoirs of Mr. Fox," and the next year his "Idyllia" and other Latin poems privately printed at Oxford, the profits, if any, to go to the suffering poor of Leipzig. It was a favourite idea of Landor's to devote the profits of his publications to some charitable purpose; unfortunately there never were any profits.

From France, where his wife and his brother

Robert joined him after a while, Landor wandered on into Italy, to Como first and then to Pisa, and finally to Florence, where he remained for a great part of his life. In 1820 appeared his "Idyllia Heroica," a revised and enlarged edition of the "Idyllia" mentioned above, most of which he afterwards turned into English and republished in his "Hellenics" many years later. With his residence in Florence began in 1821 that series of "Imaginary Conversations" which is generally recognised as Landor's greatest title to fame. His extensive reading and his powerful imagination combined to enable him to put his characters upon the scene with wonderful vividness and power. These are no longer the carved stone figures of his poems, but living and breathing men and women, perhaps a little too conscious that they are speaking before an audience, and therefore inclined to be sententious, but full of life and individuality. It is to be regretted also that, except in a few cases,—the dialogue between Horne Tooke and Johnson is a happy exception,—they will not argue; one character says his say, and then another, but there is rarely a marked continuity of thought connecting the various speeches of one man. The prose in which they speak is remarkable for its refinement, and perhaps almost too classical purity. It is hard to select any that are worthy of preference, as each reader will naturally have his own favourites; we own, how-

"Idyllia Heroica," 1820.

"Hellenics," 1847.

"Imaginary Conversations," 1824.

ever, to thinking that Landor has been most successful with the dialogues of antiquity, perhaps because the characters in these lend themselves most easily to the manner of treatment. The discussion of Demosthenes by his rival Æschines and Phocion, Diogenes bantering Plato, Cicero and his brother Quintus moralising on life and death and immortality, seem to us to be among the very finest specimens. We should not give so high a place to Landor's own favourite, the scene between Epicurus and his girl-pupils, Leontion and Ternissa, and we own to being fatigued by the letters of Pericles and Aspasia and their friends, which made their appearance after the "Conversations" in a separate work in two volumes; but we certainly think that the classical atmosphere is that best conveyed by so stately a vehicle as Landor's prose. Yet he has hardly ever excelled the dialogue of Leofric and Godiva, and a great measure of praise is due to the scene where General Kleber opens the locket of the murdered English officer, and to many other of the more modern scenes. Again the "Pentameron," a series of dialogues between Petrarch and Boccaccio, contains much fine writing and some exquisite criticism, though the latter is at times too minute, and the two great Italians show less respect for their mighty precursor than is either natural in them or judicious in Landor. In each and all of his prose writings we find the same choice language and classical diction, and in more varying

Qualities of his work.

"The Pentameron," 1837.

degree the same lofty thoughts. There is one passage which recurs to us as we write, from one of his minor works, which is a striking example of a noble thought expressed in worthy language. He is speaking of image worship among the Irish.

His lofty and classical diction.

"They have been, and ever must be, idolaters. Do not let their good clergy be angry with me for the expression. I mean no harm by it. Firmly do I believe that the Almighty is too merciful and too wise for anger or displeasure at it. Would one of these kind-hearted priests be surly at being taken for another? Certainly not, and quite as certainly the Maker of mankind will graciously accept their gratitude, whether the offering be laid in the temple or the turf, whether in the enthusiasm of the heart, before a beautiful image, expressing love and benignity, or without any visible object, in the bleak and desert air."

Many will feel with the writer of this beautiful passage, who would hardly have dared to have put their feeling into words. But to Landor hesitation in expressing his opinion was unknown; strength and fearlessness were the principal characteristics of his nature, and the most strongly reflected in his writings. He answered, indeed, in mind as in body, to the description given by a contemporary of James I. of Scotland, "a man right manly strong." And if we say that his open defiance of the world's opinion has caused his works to be merely laid aside by the great multitude of readers, we do not deny his power to compel the admiration of the critic who does venture upon them.

His characteristics, strength and fearlessness.

The first series of the "Imaginary Conversations"

appeared in 1824, with a supplementary volume four years later, the second in 1829; other dialogues were added at later periods. The "Citation and Examination of William Shakespeare," a work of imagination containing some passages of genuine humour, which was not usually Landor's strong point, in 1834, "Pericles and Aspasia," two years later, and the "Pentameron," in 1837. These, however, form his principal prose works. We have been, the reader may think, a long time in arriving at this date, with which we ought to have begun, but Landor's life stretches almost as far beyond as before the proper beginning of this record. In later life he devoted himself more to poetry again. In 1839 he commenced his dramatic trilogy on the story of Queen Joan of Naples, the last play of the series, "Fra Rupert," appearing in 1841. In 1846 he formed a collected edition of his works, in which appeared for the first time his "Hellenics," a series of poems on classical subjects which, in our opinion, have received much higher praise than was their due. In 1853 appeared a new batch of "Conversations," under the title of "The Last Fruit off an Old Tree." Would that it had indeed been his last work! for an injudicious publication entitled "Dry Sticks," five years later, involved him in a libel suit, the consequences of which threw a shadow over his later life. Many of his smaller poems were written in his latter years. Opinions differ greatly as to the

"Pericles and Aspasia," 1836.

The trilogy, 1839–1840.

"Fra Rupert," 1841.

"The Last Fruit off an Old Tree," 1853.

"Dry Sticks," 1858.

quality of Landor's minor verse, in which the standard of excellence reached by some of his work appears to be but imperfectly maintained. We have found none sweeter among his shorter poems than one of an earlier period, the consolation addressed to Mary Lamb on her brother's death, which we will venture to quote.

Quality of his minor verse.

"Comfort thee, oh thou mourner, yet awhile!
Again shall Elia's smile
Refresh thy heart, where heart can ache no more;
What is it we deplore?

He leaves behind him, freed from griefs and fears,
Far worthier things than tears,
The love of friends without a single foe;
Unequalled lot below!
His gentle soul, his genius, these are thine;
For these dost thou repine?
He may have left the lowly walks of men,
Left them he has; what then?

Are not his footsteps followed by the eyes
Of all the good and wise?
Tho' the warm day is over, yet they seek
Upon the lofty peak

Of his pure mind the roseate light that glows
O'er death's perennial snows.
Behold him! from the regions of the blest
He speaks; he bids thee rest."

Landor's last production, the "Heroic Idylls," appeared in 1863, sixty-eight years after the publication of the first "Poems of Walter Savage Landor." He

"Heroic Idylls," 1863.

died in 1864 at the age of eighty-nine. Some months before his death the old man, who, in the days when he was a clever schoolboy may have heard with interest of the publication of Cowper's "Translations from Homer," awoke from the lethargy that was creeping over him to welcome a visit from the newest young English poet, Mr. Swinburne.

Swinburne.

The writer, whose name, mainly for chronological reasons, we have coupled with Landor's, was of a very different strain. Strength, as we have said, of body and mind, of will and character, was the prominent attribute of Landor; while it will not be too harsh to say that Leigh Hunt's character was chiefly influenced by feebleness of mind and body. His faults and his good qualities alike were those of a weaker organisation; the petty meannesses, the enduring spite, the unwillingness or incapacity to take a high view even of friends and benefactors, as much as the light-heartedness and frivolity, the almost feminine grace and charm, belong alike to one who looked upon his stronger fellow-creatures as in some sort his natural protectors, endued with a special mission to watch over his delicate existence, and deserving of casual thanks when they did what was but their manifest duty, and of bitter and spiteful satire when they attended to their own affairs instead. James Henry Leigh Hunt was born at Southgate in 1784, of a West Indian family, his father being a loyal American lawyer who had

Landor and Hunt contrasted.

James Henry Leigh Hunt, 1784–1859.

come over to England when the Rebellion broke out, and who became a preacher at a chapel in Paddington, and afterwards tutor to the Hon. James Henry Leigh, from whom his son got his many names. Leigh Hunt was educated at Christ's Hospital, the school of Coleridge and Charles Lamb, and began at an early age to write verse, a volume of which, called "Juvenilia," his father had published by subscription, when the poet was barely seventeen. They had some success, and the young author continued to scribble industriously, while pretending to work at law, and having shortly after obtained a clerkship in the War Office, threw that up also to pursue his natural trade of literature, a taste shared by his brother John, with whom he founded one of the first of literary papers, the "Examiner." This daring and clever journal, however, soon got into hot-water. An article on military floggings brought the Hunts the advertisement of a prosecution, from which they came off with flying colours, owing to Brougham's advocacy. In 1812, an adulatory article in the "Morning Post," with regard to the Prince of Wales, stirred the bile of the waspish little "Examiner," which took upon itself to describe to its readers what "this delightful, blissful, wise, honourable, virtuous, true and immortal prince," was in reality. The statements might be powerful and potently believed by all men, but the government naturally held it not honesty,

"Juvenilia," 1802.

"The Examiner," 1803.

that it should be thus set down ; and the Hunts were prosecuted for libel and sentenced to two years imprisonment apiece and a fine of five hundred pounds.

Leigh Hunt was in nowise dismayed by his sentence ; he was well treated and had a pleasant room where his wife and his friends were allowed to visit him, and he continued to edit the "Examiner" just as well in prison as out of it. In 1815 he published his "Descent of Liberty," a poem on Napoleon's downfall, and also reprinted the "Feast of Poets," contributed some years before to the "Reflector" an abortive magazine started in 1810 by his speculative brother John. In 1816 followed one of his daintiest and most graceful productions, his poem on the story of Paolo and Francesca, called the "Story of Rimini." He was at this time enjoying the friendship of Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Moore, and many other leading writers of most of whom he found some opportunity to say an evil word afterwards. Meanwhile he defended them in the "Examiner," and when "Blackwood" or the "Quarterly" attacked himself, was convinced that it must really be one of his friends who was being struck at through him. He certainly did not gain much by their friendship, though Shelley with his usual generosity lent him a a large sum of money to tide over his difficulties at one period. In 1821 he was induced to join Byron and Shelley in Italy, to settle about starting a new

"Descent of Liberty."

"Story of Rimini."

quarterly to be called the "Liberal." The catastrophe which was the end of Shelley's life happened almost as soon as he had reached Pisa, and Byron's interest in the venture never seems to have been a keen one. The magazine appeared, however, the first number containing Byron's "Vision of Judgment," but in spite of all Hunt's exertions to keep it going, did not survive beyond the fourth issue. Byron and Hunt were equally bitter in attributing to each other the blame of this fiasco, each trying to saddle the other with the original responsibility of the undertaking.

Attempt to start the "Liberal."

Hunt also started various other periodicals at various times, the "Indicator," from 1819 to 1821; the "Tatler," 1830–32, and the "London Journal," 1834–35. In 1840 he produced a five act play called "A Legend of Florence," at Covent Garden Theatre, where it had a great success, among its warmest admirers being her Majesty, who insisted on having it specially performed at Windsor. He was at the same time writing biographies of Wycherley, Congreve and other dramatists, to serve as introductions to editions of their works published by Moxon, a piece of work which he did exceedingly well. The remaining years of his life were occupied in various kinds of book-making, selections from English and foreign literature and the like, all charmingly executed but of no particular importance. Among the best known are the "Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla," a work on Sicilian history poetry and

"A Legend of Florence," 1840.

"A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla."

Miscellaneous Works.

legends published in 1848, and a series of sketches of London, called "The Town; its memorable Characters and Events" (1848), afterwards supplemented by "The Old Court Suburb, or Memorials of Kensington" (1855). He died in 1859 at the age of seventy-five.

His place in literature.

It is not easy to decide what place in literature should be assigned to Leigh Hunt, but we certainly think that he has generally been ranked much too high, owing in great part to the factitious importance attaching to him as the friend of Byron and Shelley. The great bulk of his work is merely that of an agreeable *littérateur*, possessed of much fluency and ease in writing and a peculiarly graceful turn of expression. Of his poems, the "Story of Rimini," which we should rank among the highest, is full of charming poetical conceits, such as the picture of that scene where

> "April with his white hands wet with flowers,
> Dazzles the bridesmaids looking from the towers;
> Green vineyards and fair orchards, far and near,
> Glitter with drops; and heaven is sapphire clear,
> And the lark rings it, and the pine-trees glow,
> And odours from the citrons come and go:
> And all the landscape—earth and sky and sea—
> Breathes like a bright-eyed face that laughs out openly."

His poetry graceful and charming but lacking depth.

But the whole composition lacks depth; it is charming upon the surface, but there is nothing to be found below. This quality of shallowness which we regard

as attaching more or less to almost all of Leigh Hunt's work, is naturally most observable in his poetry; yet that there was something deeper and higher in the strange little man, with his half-childish, half-womanish charm, is shown by one or two gems which would make up for a great deal of lightness and superficiality. The well-known verses to his child during a sickness, are sufficient evidence of what he could write when deeply moved, but a more perfect specimen of the true, poetic sympathy with noble thoughts not necessarily brought home to him by actual experience, is given in the little poem of "Abou Ben Adhem," which we quote, well-known as it is, to demonstrate the potential greatness of a man who, in our judgment, achieved but little.

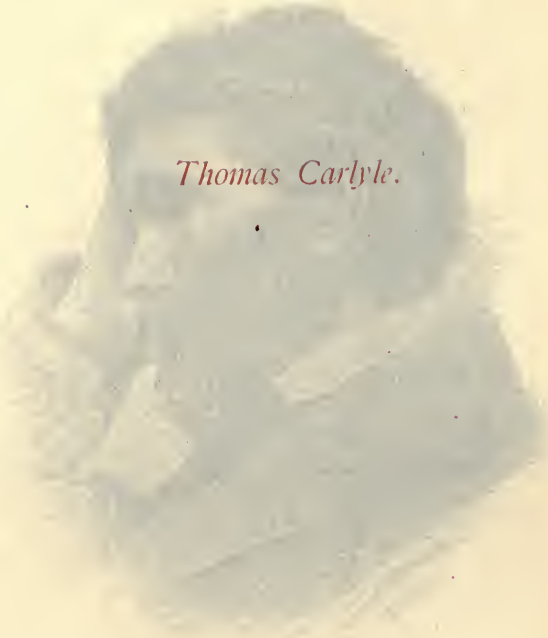
True poetic sympathy.

"Abou Ben Adhem."

"Abou Ben Adhem—may his tribe increase—
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold.
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
'What writest thou?' The vision raised his head
And with a voice made of all sweet accord,
Answered, 'The names of those who love the Lord.'
'And is mine one?' said Adhem. 'Nay, not so,'
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still, and said, 'I pray thee then
Write me as one who loves his fellow-men.'
The angel wrote and vanished. The next night
He came again with a great awakening light
And showed the names whom love of God had blest,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

Before these noble lines the voice of criticism is silent. This is not the poetry that a man can make out of his own head, but that which can only come from the true spirit working within him. Doubtless there was much good in Leigh Hunt; he was the close friend of Carlyle and of many others whose friendship was in itself a mark of honour and of merit. His life was in many ways a hard one; debt, deception and disappointment were the companions of many a time when he kept a contented smiling face to the outer world. His faults, at least, he made no attempt to hide, and the love that he gained was in spite of the knowledge of them. We may hope that his name too may be found on the angel's list, for surely no unloving heart could have given birth to so lofty a conception.

His close friendship with Carlyle.



Thomas Carlyle.

CHAPTER III.

OF THOMAS CARLYLE, JOHN STUART MILL, AND OTHER ESSAYISTS AND CRITICS.

In the midst of all these interesting and important but lesser men there now rose up somewhat suddenly into knowledge and a curiously modified and conditional fame the greatest writer of his generation—the ever-memorable, much misunderstood, mightily-misrepresented, but always noble and picturesque figure of Thomas Carlyle. He was born in 1794, in the village of Ecclefechan, among the green hills and many traditions of Annandale, of an upright and remarkable family of peasant farmers, as worthy a stock as any primitive country has ever produced, with an intelligence and intellectual capacity much beyond any expectation, combined with those strong features of character both for good and evil which were native to the soil. They were an upright, conscientious, God-fearing race, somewhat stern in religion, with a strong strain of the Old Testament in their piety; full of an exclusiveness more tremendous than any instinct of aristocracy, and a curious suspiciousness of other races and developments of men, from which their great descendant never, by any amount of experience or adulation from the world,

Thomas Carlyle, 1794–1881.

Characteristics of Carlyle's family.

could shake himself free; people who loved each other and clung to every relationship (though not without much freedom of caustic criticism among themselves) with a tenacity and force unsurpassed; but were always dubious of other people, never certain of the good meaning of those outside their circle, though very confident of their own. These peculiarities, which were common to their country and kind, have rarely been so strongly manifested to the world as by this rural family, which had come to such unusual notice and comment in the world, chiefly, as is unfortunate, by means of interpreters unacquainted by nature with the wide extension and characteristic meaning of their qualities. Carlyle was educated, as was his friend and contemporary, Edward Irving, at the Annan grammar school, where he himself in a very brilliant passage recorded long after the return of that wonderful boy in the midst of his university career, dazzling and inspiring other schoolboys of Annan. The little town and obscure school were thus made visible, as it were, in a blaze of light to the bigger world of Britain and all English-speaking people, as the cradle of two men destined to affect in the strongest degree the life and literature of the Empire.

His education.

Carlyle proceeded from thence to the University of Edinburgh, where his chief distinction seems to have been in mathematics. He was without influence, friends, or any desire to make them, a rugged, some-

His early life, and university career.

what repellant, defiant young man, fearing, as the very devil himself, any attempt at patronage, yet entertaining from the beginning a determination to make himself famous. His youth, though poor enough and accompanied by many struggles of the mind and thoughts, as well as a poverty, which to many might have been abject, but to him was but the spare and self-denying ordinary of life, was not without success. When he left college he became a schoolmaster for a time, first at Annan, then at Kirkcaldy, and was always able to maintain himself, the first essential to a young man in his position; nor was he ever without friends. In the year 1822, at the age of twenty-seven, he entered the Buller family as tutor, under circumstances so unlike those of the usual tutor of literature, that we can only wonder at his conquest of all the supposed disagreeables of a dependent life. He obtained this exceptional position by the recommendation of Edward Irving and by the remarkable penetration and insight of a family which he learned to like almost in spite of himself, and in which he became acquainted, as few Scotch student-tutors do, with the life of a class which may be called the highest in English society. And though his success was more slow than his friend's proud hopes had expected, he had attained, before even he had reached the height of life, to a reputation which went on increasing, notwithstanding that he never could be anything but caviare to the general, until he reached

His struggles at college.

Tutor of the Buller family.

Friendship with Edward Irving

the highest pinnacle of fame and became the undoubted first of writers in his age. His struggles with his health, with his temper, with the exclusive and high-strung nature which was the great drawback of his genius, were sometimes tragical, often whimsical, sometimes laughable. They were taken, as such struggles had best be, by a wife extraordinarily suited to him, with the mingled sympathy, impatience, mockery, respect, and banter which were natural to her keen wit and thorough understanding of the man with whom she had to deal; but have been taken by his biographers and commentators *au grand sérieux*, as if everyone of his half-conscious exaggerations were real, and the life, which was on the whole a noble and noteworthy life, full of many enjoyments and successes, had been one of almost uninterrupted gloom and wretchedness.

His high-strung nature.

This false view of two great and remarkable persons —for Mrs. Carlyle, though in many respects voluntarily effacing herself in her husband's greater light, was as unusual an apparition in the routine of ordinary life, and almost as original in character and genius as himself—is too strongly rooted in the mind of the general reader ever to be altered now, and every differing estimate of their being must come in as a protest, a remonstrance against a settled conclusion. We will not, therefore, lose time in the attempt to convey a different opinion to the public mind. Carlyle enjoyed for many years the homage of his

The false view of his family life.

country, universally acknowledged as one of its greatest men, loved by many, and proving to many the possession of a heart full of kindness and generosity, as well as a great and extraordinary genius. No man ever left this world more full of honours, more completely possessed of the respect, veneration and proud recognition of his countrymen. But within a year or two after his death, his reputation had been torn to rags and thrown to the dogs, at the mercy of every dirty cur in England. Not that the records of his life had revealed one evil action, one act of treachery, dishonesty, or bad faith, but solely because of the artificial sense given to his most private sentiments and domesticities—the betrayal of those half-ravings of stormy and remorseful grief, in which the gentlest spirit sympathises with the most violent, in self-reproach for its behaviour towards the lost companions of life—a mental malady as well known and universal as grief itself. Such an overturn of popular sentiment has never, we believe, been known in literary history ; nor, in our own opinion, anyone so undeserved. The faithful and tender companion of Carlyle's life, she who had valiantly stood between him and every annoyance for more than forty years of union, broken by nothing but an occasional strain of feeling, the little resentments and contrarieties of life which arise sometimes between the mildest of pairs, and could not but exist between two so individual, so original, so independent, keen-witted and outspoken—this

Disastrous effects of the publication of the "Diary."

most loyal wife and trusted friend was disinterred out of her grave to bear witness against him. We repeat that such an act of iconoclasm, of personal unfaith, and, not least, of misunderstanding, was never done before.

Translation of Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," 1824.

Carlyle's literary life began by his translation of Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," and by his life of Schiller;—the first a translation of a remarkable kind, with a flavour of German still in the English, but not of that ignorant sort which stamps imperfect knowledge, rather the characteristic tone which keeps the reader in pleasant remembrance of the spirit of a foreign tongue;—the latter an admirable biography, full of insight and knowledge. The "Schiller," which was intended to be one of a series of "Portraits of Men of Genius and Character," was first published in the "London Magazine." "Meister," for which he received a good price—£180 for the first edition, the translation of a book as yet unknown to the English public by a young man totally unknown to it, was certainly excellent pay—was published in the beginning of 1824; the "Schiller" in the end of that year. Both were favourably if not enthusiastically received. In one instance, indeed, and that a most gratifying one, the latter word might almost be applied to Goethe's appreciation of both books, modestly sent to him by the as yet unknown writer, of whom he prophesied that he should yet hear much.

"Life of Schiller," 1824.

Carlyle left the Bullers in the year 1824 in order to devote himself to literary work, and in 1826, after a somewhat stormy courtship, married Jane Welsh, the daughter of Dr. Welsh, of Haddington, a popular and successful country practitioner, perhaps the only woman in the world who rightly understood and could fully have mated him. Detached from intolerable commentaries and explanations—the interpretations by a mind wholly formed and trained in another *milieu* and imbued with all the prejudices of a totally different life—the correspondence of the new pair, as it will be found in the "Life," is wholly delightful, full of love, sympathy, and brightness. They were undoubtedly a strange pair—she born sarcastic, unable to refrain from throwing dazzling darts of mischief, ridicule, keen wit, all about her, incapable at any time of avoiding or not perceiving the ridiculous side of all affairs—he accustomed to exaggerate all his dyspeptic and other troubles, and *not* capable of putting on paper the great volcanic outbreak of laughter that generally swept his complaints and grumblings away. Curiously enough, the portion of their early life which was spent in Edinburgh—in Comely Bank, an idyllic title for the dwelling of such a pair—was passed without much apparent contact with the brilliant society then existing there, which must, one supposes, have been Carlyle's fault, though with all his girdings at society he was as little able to do

Marriage to Jane Welsh, 1826.

Life in Edinburgh.

without the fellowship of his kind as any man ever was, and as a matter of fact had many and attached friends everywhere. He did not care for Wilson, or Wilson was "for some reason shy of him"—why, we cannot tell. He never was indeed popular with the clan of "Blackwood" for some untold cause; therefore there must probably have been some offense given or taken, perhaps unconsciously. It is scarcely possible to think of any fellowship between him and De Quincey, yet he had a kindly admiration for the Opium-eater. On the other hand, Jeffrey, the clear-headed, vivacious, generous soul, the head of the other camp, had no sooner seen this shy and rustic man, and always prone, we may be sure, to exaggerate his homeliness of manner when he came in contact with the polite circles of literature, than he perceived what was in him and hastily adopted into his friendship both man and wife, Mrs. Carlyle attracting him at once to an enthusiasm of friendship, though only after his keen and bright perceptions had divined and understood the greater figure by her side. Unfortunately, this did not occur till the end of their life in Edinburgh, when all was already arranged for the transfer of the household gods to the moors of Dumfriesshire. Their intercourse resulted immediately, however, in work, which was the thing Carlyle wanted most—work which he could satisfy himself was not merely the composition of those "articles" which seemed to him a sell-

Friendship with Jeffrey.

Removal to Dumfriesshire.

ing of the soul to Mammon in Hazlitt and De Quincey. His "Miscellaneous Essays," chiefly on the subject of German literature, and the first revelation of that literature to many, were the immediate issue of his connection with Jeffrey—essays written before his style had acquired all those thunderous qualities which afterwards made it so attractive to some, so repellent to others. Vigorous English with a few idioms and turns of phrase caught now from native Scotch, now from the loved Teutonic, were these narratives and criticisms. To those who never acquired a taste for the vast-flowing Solway-flood of the style by which he was distinguished in after life, and in which his greatest works were written, these six volumes of Essays still give assurance of a noble writer above the need of any eccentricity in word or work.

"Miscellaneous Essays."

Thunderous qualities of their style.

Had these essays been written and his connection with so important and imposing a literary enterprise as the "Edinburgh Review" begun a year sooner, it is possible that the life in Edinburgh might have been prolonged and might have been more satisfactory; but these are speculations which are not admissible in human affairs. He was on the eve of leaving for his wife's little moorland house of Craigenputtock when Jeffrey first appeared on his horizon. There, with occasional breaks—a six months in London which brought the pair into a society which fully appreciated them—or rather it is

Connection with the "Edinburgh Review."

more true to say into the frequent company of a few equals and disciples who more or less spoke their own language, and understood what they meant to be at—they remained for six years, from 1828 to 1834. This period has been supposed one long period of agony in Mrs. Carlyle's life, during which she laboured and suffered in utter loneliness and menial toil, and sowed the seeds of ailment, both physical and mental. As a matter of fact, the life was one by no means unusual or unparalleled at the time. She gave a thousand picturesque sarcastic thrilling accounts of it, often in fun, often in comic despair, sometimes in real discouragement and weariness, such as is apt to overcome everyone whatever the speciality of their labours may be. But she was not, which is the impression of her husband's biographers, a Duke's daughter, a fine lady utterly unacquainted with domestic cares and toil. She had to do many things with her own hands, as the mistress of a small household imperfectly served by a maid of all work generally has to do. Such a fate contained nothing extraordinary for a country doctor's daughter. She might have made a better match. Still such a match must have been always on the cards for her. Among her contemporaries many no doubt did no better. Had she married Edward Irving, as it is said, but we think mistakenly, she at one time wished to do, she would have had a very similar fate, except in so far that the Scotch minis-

Mrs. Carlyle.

Her household life in London.

ter's humble home in Pentonville would have been less, not more, suitable to her than her own bare little ancestral lodge on the moor. Much that is unutterably foolish has been written on this subject—void of all understanding, as the conceptions of critics born in another sphere and of a different generation, are apt to be, however able and powerful may be the minds that are brought to bear upon matters too high or too low for them. The letters of this period, if taken without comment, convey one of the most delightful pictures of mutual love and tenderness. The caressing affection of their tone, the deep sense on Carlyle's part that without his Goody he is an incomplete man, the fond family jests and banter, are to ourselves a full exposition of the terms on which the pair stood, which no able editor can obscure, though, the circumstances being as little understood by the majority of his readers as by himself, and the story being made much more piquant by the light thus imported into it, the able editor in this case has succeeded in obscuring and throwing dust in the eyes of the too credulous and undiscriminating multitude.

Their affectionate letters.

However, this narrative is of the literary life of Carlyle, though it is almost impossible to pass by the view authoritatively given of his moral and social circumstances without comment. The years he passed at Craigenputtock, or Craig o' Putta, as it is frequently called in the letters, was the true period of incubation for Carlyle's genius, and laid the foun-

Life at Craigenputtock.

dation of all his future work and fame. Here his beliefs, such as they were, took form and established themselves. What they finally came to be it is difficult to tell, even after all the expositions given by his biographer and by other authorities. Mr. Froude describes the revolution in his thoughts by the emblem of Galileo's discovery that the sun did not revolve round the earth, but the earth round the sun, thus making plain the fact that our world was no longer the centre of a system made for its convenience, but only an atom in the vast universe. We are obliged to say that no light to speak of is thrown to ourselves upon Carlyle's creed by this simile, though it is no doubt a fine one, and indeed originally used by himself in those interpretations which are generally but fresh whirlings and blasts of cloud, and contain no precise light whatever. There is no reason to suppose that he meant any light to be precise. His mission was to show to the world the cloud wrappings, the strange delusive vapours, the deep abysses of mystery in which our little tangible life floats, surrounded on every side by bewildering darkness, and wonders which no man can clear up. To those who saw in it a clear, comfortable, solid universe enough, the best of all possible worlds, in which man's chief end was to attain comfort and respectability, he was a great destructive, pulling down every foundation and leaving the unhappy soul weltering in mists and marshes of the unknowable.

Religious beliefs influenced by Galileo's discovery.

And yet in all his scorn of the things that be, in all his wild expositions of "that stuff that dreams are made of," in all his indignant denunciations of sham and false appearances, he held fast to the great central idea of God and Providence—a Being before whom every man should answer for his deeds, a divine and miraculous system in which at the last everlasting Justice would be found supreme. This was the only thing he was sure of; but of it he was as sure as that he lived. The mists and tempests that whirled about his head, the wild quagmires which he felt to spread around him, the rolling billows of cloud which shut out except in glimpses all natural shining, never blurred for him the consciousness of one eye that penetrated all, the certainty of that power which is beyond and above all the contentions of earth. That the world was a place for a man to make his way in, to make his fortune, to attain comfort and reputation by steady climbing, catching at every twig to help himself up, was the famous gospel of respectability which he felt himself bound to trample under foot; and it is true that he had no other gospel to proclaim; that was not his business. In his mind there was little hope of any; sometimes when excited by the sight of what he considered sham religion, he was wildly and contemptuously profane: often when moved by real piety and devotion, tenderly reverent and respectful. But his faith was this only—the faith of a man con-

His belief.

scious of God everywhere—God undeniable, all pervading, whose ways were righteousness, and whose service was the only use of man. This was much. On other matters he pronounced according to his feelings and moods, often those of the moment only. On this he stood as on a rock. The world to him was full of the wildest phantasmagoria, the puniest atoms of living creatures playing such pranks before high heaven! performing all injustices, cruelties, intolerable perversities, storming out their little day of contradiction and blasphemy. But over all God looking on, permitting the wild tempest to work itself out, keeping ever, through all seeming impossibility, the reins in His own hands. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision," most terrible words of any in Holy Writ, might have been the text upon which Carlyle's work was founded.

Always subject to his heart and feelings.

And yet we think amid all his consciousness of supreme thought, and a tempestuous power of intellect, and all the drawbacks of gloomy and arrogant nature with which he is credited, Carlyle was always, both as a man and a writer, subject to his heart and feelings in a way which few have been. The veriest sham and impostor denounced in burning words, once brought into contact with him, showing another personal side, the real side of nature, became at once a man and a brother. Against no voice out of a human heart could his heart steel itself. Fire

and flame and the bellowings as of a volcano in labour, for the abstract, the general; for the individual once actually brought before him, instant perception of those gleams of humanity, those underlights of truth which are to be perceived in most men by the eye that can see. Coming into a London drawing-room with his intense peasant suspiciousness and distrust of his fellow-men, with his equally intense peasant expectation that here at last might be found the society of the imagination, the brilliant talk and lofty thought which he had believed in from the time of earliest musings and eager hopes conceived in his father's farmyard or among the beasts on the Annandale farm—he turned with disgust and a silent anathema, finding it all empty talk and foolish rivalry: but once seduced into a corner with —it scarcely mattered whom—looking into a pair of unaffected human eyes, brought to bay and to conversation, the abstract opposition, so fiery, so bitter, so almost vindictive in dislike and disappointment, floated in a moment away, and the man he spoke to became tolerable, if not lovable; no thing at all to be denounced, but a fellow-creature, perhaps a friend. "Rather liked the man, and shall like to see him again," he says. And so it happens constantly. Scarcely a better illustration could be given than the way in which Leigh Hunt was treated by Carlyle, supposed essence of all that was rude, violent and intolerant, and Dickens the sentimental optimist,

His intense sympathy with human nature and horror of shams.

Carlyle's treatment of Leigh Hunt.

Dickens' treatment of Carlyle.

full of gushing brotherhood and geniality. The rugged Scotch philosopher who hated everything that was unreal, could not discredit or push from him the kindly neighbour whose weakness indeed he gradually got to know, but never stigmatised with any cruel word. The gushing and genial novelist made of him one of the most remorseless sketches ever drawn, impaling his friend on the sharpest stake of criticism to the laughter and enjoyment of the public. Carlyle was capable of a sweep of wrath over the heads of his company, devoting it in general to the infernal gods, but never of such a treachery as this.

The chief outcome of the life at Craigenputtock was "Sartor Resartus," the great test-work and shibboleth by which the true Carlyle-lover is to be proved at all times. It was amid all the "articles" which kept the family going, and which by that time had developed from essays on German literature to such a tremendous chapter of history as the Diamond Necklace, the first real revelation of the new form in literature—that this book was produced. Its strange philosophy, its stranger tumultuous volcanic style, its extraordinary stamp of a burning earnestness and meaning which were incomprehensible to the multitude, stupefying instead of exciting the public, came out in the last form which was likely to do them justice—in successive instalments in "Fraser's Magazine" during the year 1833. And we can but

"Sartor Resartus" appeared in "Fraser's Magazine," 1833.

honour the daring publisher who ventured to place it there, and to pay solid money for it, after its rejection by all the great firms who returned it with dumb amaze—to the dogged resignation of the author; whose determination some time or another to bring out "Dreck," as the unfortunate manuscript was called in the family, and force him upon the stupid race which had not discernment enough to see what was in him, never faltered. That "Dreck" caught here and there a listening ear, and that even among those to whom much of the rhapsody and whirlwind was incomprehensible there were a few landscapes, a few situations which could not be forgotten —there can be little doubt. The wonderful episode of childhood, the home scenes of Wessnichtwo (Kennaquhair according to Sir Walter, in the vernacular Ecclefechan, there standing for ever in ethereal light and soft visionary shadow)—the mountain path where the hero-philosopher sees love and happiness sweep past him in the carriage that bears Blumine and her lover across the Alps, were not to be passed lightly by; but the book itself was like the song of the Ancient Mariner, a thing to be delivered into the ear of the man whom the poet could discern as he passed to be the man who could hear, and whom no wedding feast or brave procession could deliver from the necessity. The public learned afterwards, from the insistence of these predestined listeners, to receive with respect and a certain awe

"Dreck."

The Home Scenes of Wessnichtwo.

"Sartor Resartus."

those wild vaticinations of the new prophet, but never heartily took to "Dreck"; though by means of its power of showing in the strongest form all the peculiarities and extravagancies of its author, it was swept afterwards into the adoration of many who without much understanding always find the exaggerated gestures of the orator, the wildest tropes of the poet, most easy to mimic and to adore.

Life, however, was kept going at Craigenputtock with occasionally a bad moment, as when the household, with its numerous dependants, Brother John in London, Brother Alick on the farm, had but five pounds between them and ruin—a condition probably momentary, perhaps stated with a certain eye to the effect to be produced on languid souls not sufficiently determined to help themselves—until that solitude became intolerable, its uses being exhausted, and the great genius of its inhabitant sufficiently matured, and the pair finally, after various hesitations, came to London, where they settled in the month of February, 1834, in that little well-known house in Cheyne Row, which they never left for any prolonged period again. A little old-fashioned house with dark panelled gleaming walls, so much of them as were not covered with books—where all that was best in England, as well as much that was far from the best, the natural drift of straw and hay and stubble which gets upon every living current, came and shone and talked; and where many a scene, half

Removal to London. 1834.

pathetic, half romantic, never without a ludicrous side, was recorded by the swift flashing pen, full of satire, fun and tears, of the house-historian—the Goody of early years, the brilliant, tender woman whose nature it was to spread a veil of mockery over her warmest feelings, and hide with a jibe the "gush" which was not to her Scotch kind and generation a permitted thing. Two scenes remain in the memory from the much recorded incidents of that life—the evenings in the firelight, when the sage sat and discoursed of his work to his wife lying on the sofa in the shadow, responding, keeping up the stream, sometimes wishing in her heart that he would remember her headache and inquire into her domestic cares a little, and perhaps saying so to her next correspondent, to whom, in a hundred playful lights and shadows, she repeated the habitual scenes, proud of the picture though flinging her swift arrow through the chief figure of it all the same. And there is another which dwells in the personal recollection of the present writer, when both were old, when the wife opened the old-fashioned little square piano, the same no doubt that had been tuned to his delight and made music possible at Craigenputtock, and played to the tall old man in his grey dressing-gown, sitting meditative by the fire. A prettier, more touching scene could not be. She played to him—What? the reader may ask. Great strains of Handel or Beethoven, fit for angels to hear? Oh no!

Home life in Cheyne Row Chelsea.

Carlyle had no ear for the great masters, knew nothing of music as people say. She played him the old tunes of his own countryside, the native music often so rich in natural pathos, so soft in artless melody, so ringing and joyous in its accompaniment of rustic revel. Such scenes remain along with many evidences of absolute union; yet, no doubt, there were weepings and there were discords under that modest roof—moments of intense strain and even conflict, embittered by the fact that this pain has none of the common troubles of life to supply the sharp and pungent salt of common preoccupation to the common meal—no children coming and going, no sorrows to be borne together; no sons or daughters to be followed afar by anxieties and thoughts; but all concentrated as within the strait horizon of a pair of lovers who must quarrel or die—of which unfortunate circumstances much mischief, and a general fictitious representation, falsely true, had been made and remains.

"History of the French Revolution," 1837.

Carlyle's first work in London was the "History of the French Revolution," which brings him, after all these preliminaries, into our special period. One of the first literary distinctions of Queen Victoria's reign was the publication of this book, which took place in the year of her Majesty's accession, 1837. The perfection at once of that new grandiose yet rugged voice, which broke every law of composition and triumphed over them all, which shocked and be-

wildered all critics and authorities, yet excited and stirred the whole slumbrous world of literature, and rang into the air like a trumpet,—and of a new manner altogether of regarding the events of history, a great pictorial representation, all illuminated by the blaze, sometimes lurid, sometimes terrible, of the highest poetic genius and imagination,—were fully displayed in this astonishing work. Histories enough of the French Revolution had been given to the world, and have been since—personal experiences, formal documents, fictitious narratives, all the collections of material possible, showed forth in almost every setting that could be thought of,—but none which conveyed the very sound and uproar of that wild orgie of the fates ; none that showed the unhappy confused workings of those blind guides and leaders, of those still more blind opponents of the national frenzy, with such living force and power. If they are all perhaps too much like wild shadows running thither and hither against a background of flame and smoke and ever-blazing fire, that is the very bitterness of the truth with which the genius of Carlyle seized the reality of the most lamentable, the most awful, the most influential of recent epochs. It is no mere record, but a great drama passing before our eyes. We are made spectators rather than readers of the terrible developments, one after another, of each successive act. A drama working blindly towards a *dénouement* of

Great dramatic power and highest poetic genius displayed in this work.

Not a mere record, but a great drama.

which its actors had neither conception nor intention, through which they blindly stalk, stumble, fall, each in his turn bringing numerous and unthought of complications, new turns and twists of fate, as veritably happened, as happens continually, though to most generations there is no Seer to perceive how these strange new openings and closings succeed each other, and how the great thread of destiny rolls on.

His character and philosophy impressed on the public.

It is a significant sign of the fact that he had already impressed himself, his character and philosophy, upon something that could be called the public, that so early as this year Carlyle delivered a series of lectures, which were tolerably well and profitably attended. From the beginning he had been recognised by everybody of special ability or discrimination with whom he had been brought into contact, and he had scarcely more than appeared in London before he was surrounded with appreciation and friendship.

His old friend Irving dead of consumption.

His old friend, Irving, who had done all that in him lay on Carlyle's first brief visit to London to extend his acquaintance and his fame, had by this time departed from the world of agitation and religious excitement, the troublous formation of a new sect, in which, though he was the greatest agent, he was far from being the leader—and Carlyle had entered, if not sympathetically, yet with grief and pity, into the ending of that tragedy. But the stepping-stone of that early friendship had been for

sometime quite unnecessary to him. He began to be sought after everywhere by great persons at home, and by pilgrims from beyond the seas. The best of his literary contemporaries in London, John Stuart Mill, the Austins, Monckton Milnes, afterward Lord Houghton, always a true and steadfast friend, and many more had appreciated him from the first, and now circled about him. Notable foreigners, especially of the revolutionary kind, were brought to the little hospitable house, where all the simple fare there was, was shared liberally with those who came. This society went on increasing till it included all that was distinguished in Great Britain; and in a wonderfully short space of time the Annandale peasant farmer, retaining in many ways the prejudices, and unaltered the accent, of his native district (the present writer never heard him, however, speak the "broad Scots," which is so freely put into his mouth by witnesses perhaps less acquainted with it), became in his uncompromising individuality, conciliating nobody, the acknowleged head and most prominent figure in English literature. There can be little doubt that it was his "French Revolution" which turned the scale—a book more interesting than any romance, which those who took it up could not lay down, and which was far too impressive in its general character, too powerful and novel in its art, to be mistaken or overlooked.

His literary contemporaries.

Hospitality.

Acknowledged head of English Literature.

Carlyle was made president of the newly-founded

"Heroes and Hero-worship," 1841.

London Library in 1839, a proof of the position accorded him by the press. He had come to London comparatively unknown only five years before. In that year was published his essay on "Chartism." In 1840 he delivered, and in 1841 published his "Heroes and Hero-worship"; and in 1845 the great work on Cromwell, which at last fairly brought him within knowledge of the multitude, and added to all previous and more precious fame, the applause, evidenced by a large sale and complete success in a pecuniary point of view, of the crowd. This may be considered as the climax of Carlyle's fame, which was always a fame full of contradictions, hotly discussed in every society, causing a ferment of almost personal feeling between those that were for and those that were against the great writer, who considered the prejudices of no one, and fully gave forth his own with all the force of his great character and impassioned utterance. In 1849 his scornful uncompromising treatment of the "Nigger Question," made many hearts of his disciples quake, as did the "Latter Day Pamphlets," published in 1850. His "Life of John Sterling," followed in 1851—in our opinion, notwithstanding all the power and beauty of the sketch, an unfortunate book, as his friendship with that deeply impressionable and sadly destined young man, was perhaps unfortunate too. What a man believes is his own. What is good in it may be enough for him, and for what is wrong in it he must himself

"Cromwell," 1845.

The climax of Carlyle's fame.

"Life of John Sterling," 1851.

bear the responsibility; but it is an overbold and terrible thing to interfere with the foundations of another, especially when the one who interferes is strong above the tempests of life, while the other is weak and surrounded by all its trials and sorrows. We confess that to ourselves Carlyle is at his moral worst in this book. He sees his friend too much as he saw the heroes of the French Revolution, all round, against the bigger background which makes of him but a drifting speck, blown here and there, of so little ultimate importance, his little passions and agonies so ephemeral, so mere a shadow in the great phantasmagoria of life. This is a treatment which is extraordinarily impressive in history, but which all human feeling cries out against in the case of a known man and friend.

"Frederick the Great," 1858–1862. 1865.

When it was known that Carlyle had taken as his next subject the history of Frederick the Great, there was a commotion of expectation in the world which was not all agreeable. His future audience shook their heads over his choice of a subject. Frederick, he who had annexed Silesia, he who had ridden red-handed over half Europe! It had been hard enough to swallow Waterford and Derry in his justifications of their horrors, but how were we to take the German despot to our bosoms even at his bidding? This book took him the strenuous labour of years. He sought his material far and wide, always with the anxious help and furtherance of everybody at home

or abroad who could be of service to him. For many years he and his household dwelt darkly in the "valley of the shadow of Frederick" as his wife said. At last the laborious work came to an end, the first two volumes being published in 1858, the later ones in 1862, 1864, and 1865. It was received with even more contradictory and mingled sentiments than Cromwell. Of that book there was much criticism, and many dissentients: but the man at least was our own, and the strong elucidations of his great career, were of the deepest interest to his race. But Frederick was a foreign despot who had little in him to recommend him either to the heart or judgment. Carlyle's worship of strength and force, his love for the bold, the daring, for uncompromising action and the tenacity that never loses hold of its object, were his inspirations in this extraordinary piece of history. He set Germany before us as he had set France, but not in that chaos of conflicting influences which had made all France shimmer and burn before our eyes. The German epic was not that of a nation, but of one man. The book had an enormous popularity and success in the external way, as now had every word that came from his pen, but it had not the same exciting and inspiring power as those that went before.

Its reception and criticism.

In 1865 he was elected Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, and felt the compliment thus paid him to the bottom of his heart, with a pleasure which he

Election to the Lord Rectorship of Edinburgh University.

would fain have hid under the old misanthropical pretences of indifference to the applause of the public, but could not, in the unaffected gratification it gave him. He went to Edinburgh, beyond all hope of his young constituency, to give them the habitual address. Alas, the journey was ill-starred! His wife had spent the time of the trial and ordeal of the speech, which she had feared might be too much for him, in a restless anxiety, and impatience to be with him, wonderings whether he would be properly cared for, and breathless realisation of every step he was taking, which was more like the absorption of a lover, or of one of those mothers who live but in the life of a cherished child, than the sober sympathy of an elderly and, as supposed, disappointed wife. When she heard by telegram of the triumphant reception and success of his appearance in Edinburgh, she began to breathe freely again; but she was by this time entirely shattered in health, a shadow of her former self, worn to attenuation, and so feeble that we well recollect our reluctance to leave her, to permit her to return home alone, which she insisted upon doing after a visit made to the present writer. No doubt these anxieties had so fretted the slender thread of existence, which, never strong, had now lasted for seventy years, that the simplest accident was enough to snap it asunder. This accident occurred a few days after, in the carriage in which she was taking her daily drive. And Carlyle

Mrs. Carlyle's pathetic anxiety and devotion.

His triumphant reception in Edinburgh.

Death of Mrs. Carlyle.

came home to a desolate house from which everything that made it home had departed for ever.

Carlyle's intense remorseful grief.

She had fretted that ending life out in anxieties for him ; he lived the life that remained in a mourning for her which was so intense, so full of remorse and compunction, as to be excessive and unjust to himself. No one who has lost a dear companion but has suffered more or less from that malady. It is one which embitters the grief of the fondest and most faithful heart. We have never done enough, never loved enough those who have been the objects of our deepest affection, when the darkness closes over them and we can no longer explain or ask pardon. Carlyle recollected every rough word, every ill-humour of his life, as he sat mourning like a child in her deserted drawing-room. He magnified her until it seemed to the hearers as if she had been a princess stooping out of her state to him, and he the clown, had never been grateful, never recompensed her, never seen all her sacrifice and condescension till now. From this fond superstition of the heart, the faithful old lover of Jeanie Welsh never recovered, but sat bemoaning himself and exalting her for the rest of the dim years of his life ; sometimes in a rage of grief at himself and all who had not done her sufficient honour ; sometimes uttering the most pathetic soft recollections of her youthful beauty and grace, elegies and mournful litanies in her praise. "There was none like her, none." The depth of this compunctious

love was taken by at least one bystander for a real and matter-of-fact indictment by Carlyle of himself—a self-accusation of the bitterest kind. Such self-accusations come from those who have least reason to reproach themselves. In the depth of his passionate grief the old man took up again that pen of his which had been as a flaming sword, full of lightning and gleams of fire, and began to write wildly, he knew not what, tracing his own life from its beginning ; sometimes with the tenderest shadows and touches of that consoling imagination which by moments takes even despair out of itself ; sometimes with hot reflections of the grief-passion turned to ire, and fiery impatience with all around. This book, or collection of pictures of his life, in the stiller, dimmer, but calmer twilight which succeeded, he forgot that he had written—recollecting only that something there was that should not be printed without the most careful editing—or "better not at all." One or two other brief outbursts, forebodings of political evil, came from him and were published in the following years—"Shooting Niagara" for one, the very burden of a prophet of evil, in 1867 ; and certain polemical defences of the conduct of Germany in the war, in 1870. He died in 1881, having survived, but never ceased to mourn, his wife for fifteen years.

Distressful condition in which "Reminiscences," were written.

Miscellaneous works

He was no sooner dead—this great, universally honoured chief of literature in England, a man against whom no one had a word to say, to whom the nation

His death, 1881.

The "Reminiscences."

itself, amid all its huge businesses and interests, gave a moment's pause of respectful silence to acknowledge his greatness—than the book of his fiery grief, the "Reminiscences," which had given outlet to his passion and misery, and of which he remembered only that it was to be anxiously revised or not published at all, was flung, just as it was, like a red-hot stone in the face of the country which mourned for Carlyle. In the "Chronicles of the Canongate," there is a terrible picture, too piteous, too miserable almost to bear, of the babbling wrath and irritation of the old man paralysed and broken, whose trembling niece and faithful attendant try hard to conceal him in his wretchedness even from a sympathetic eye. The publication of the "Reminiscences" as they stand, was as if these devoted nurses had reported all the stammering, vain passion of the sick man, the frenzy of his indignation when he was not understood. Carlyle was so much in a worse position that even that irritability of grief, half-wrought to madness, was instinct with genius, and that many beautiful things were thrown into the mass, molten together with the fiery lava stream that flowed between. The public caught breathless, as was natural, at this last legacy of the great spirit departed, this self-revelation, self-betrayal, of which the piteous meaning escaped the common eye. They concluded that this and thus was the man whom they had blindly respected; and when his biography fol-

lowed in the same tone, perhaps it was little wonder that the pause of reverence and awe with which three kingdoms saw the aged head of their greatest writer disappear into the grave, was broken with railing and with mockery on every side. These things are difficult to speak of with patience and moderation—all the more that the impression thus deeply stamped upon the common mind when it was most ready to receive the image, is now, we fear, without remedy, an impression not to be effaced, and from which even the calmer judgment of posterity will find it difficult to get free.

Carlyle and Mill contrasted

One of Carlyle's earliest friends in London, and for many years most constant associate and companion, was a man in every respect so different from himself that it is curious to imagine how they could ever have found a common standing ground. The calm philosophy of John Stuart Mill, his lucid and careful English, his character of mild sentiment and well-ordered thinking, would seem to have made it little possible that he could have found anything congenial in the tumultuous and rugged Scotsman, with his whirlwinds of thought, his impassioned nature and diction. But that he did so, seeing at the first glance what was in that ignored and unsuccessful author, is one of the greatest evidences of his insight and understanding. Mill himself had been long known to the world as one of the first of the philosophers and thinkers of his generation, by far the

John Stuart Mill, 1806–1873.

finest production of the Utilitarian school, before the singular revelations of his autobiography brought the man himself and the secret of his being to the public knowledge. It was thus only after his death that the larger circle of his countrymen, to whom he was personally unknown, came to know the man whose works had been taught in their highest schools, and shaped their own forms of thought for years.

His father's singular characteristics.

He was born in 1806 in London ; the son of James Mill, who was one of the most devoted disciples of Bentham, living under the same roof with that curious embodiment of reason, invention, and cheerful self-absorption, in his later days, and in himself a still more wonderful combination of the hard and the sensitive theory carried to the point of extravagance, the obduracy of iron in carrying out his own plans, and the sensibility of a woman to affront or coldness from others. John Stuart Mill was the eldest son of this singular man, and taken by him remorselessly out of his cradle to be the subject of such a tremendous experiment as never father in his senses tried before. The Chinese bind up the feet of their women children from their earliest years, but the elder Mill improved upon this process, and bound his child's mind at an age too early even to show the first bud of promise, in an iron machinery which

Subjected to an iron discipline.

crushed the very head and heart of the unfortunate boy into the mould which his merciless father meant him to take. The incredible age at which he be-

came a prodigy of learning, the iron bondage in which he lived, the ceaseless and awful processes of education through which he was put and which took all childhood, all the delight of early youth from him, twisting his nature, and, to a painful degree, altering his natural constitution, he himself has told us. There is no more remarkable human document in existence. The unfortunate child subjected to this iron discipline was of a mild and moderate nature, incapable of rebellion. He had a mind naturally attuned to poetry and emotion, but was so set and bound by the remorseless machinery of his life, that when the period of manhood and freedom came, and the better aspect of existence was revealed to him, a miracle which befell through the poetry of Wordsworth, the sunshine came too late, and only awakened with its sudden warmth and lustre, a wistful sense of something lost. Perhaps his education helped to promote the concentration and lucidity of mind which has made his greatest work, his "System of Logic," so great a boon both to instructors and pupils, the most important work upon that subject since Bacon.

His mind naturally attuned to poetry and emotion.

His concentration and lucidity of mind.

His education was conducted exclusively by his father and according to his rigid system without any beneficial distraction from school or college life. He was born under the very shadow of Bentham, and his mother was one of those predestined producers of large families who have no leisure left

Trained in the utilitarian school

them to exercise any influence upon their eldest born, even had she been capable of it, of which there is no evidence, so that his last chance of the operations of simple life was lost. Mill made up for this later on by falling unreservedly into the power of a lady who shaped, we have no right to say otherwise than beneficially, the course of his after life, though this revenge of nature involved him, in his latter days, in some questionable theories and special pleadings, founded rather on communicated enthusiasm than on individual thoughts.

Placed in the India House.

When his strange education was over, at the early age of seventeen, he was placed in the severe routine of a public office, the India House, in which his father's interest lay, and continued there, rising to a very responsible position, and exercising much influence, from 1823 until the dominion of the Honorable East India Company came to an end in the convulsion of the Mutiny of 1857, and the government of that vast dependency was transferred to the Crown. He was offered then a seat in the Indian Council, a high and responsible, as well as lucrative, appointment, but retired instead from the official life which he had entered so early, and in which he had gained nothing but honour. There is very little of all this in his autobiography; it was, though full of public importance and real influence, but the background of that life of thought which was his element. Quite early in life he became

Declines a seat in the Indian Council.

connected with the "Examiner" already spoken of in connection with Leigh Hunt, one of the first of those weekly newspapers which combined literature with politics, a liberal organ of great influence while it lasted, and conducted with much ability, to which he was a regular contributor for a long time; and with the "Westminster Review" also already referred to, the special representative of Bentham and his school, of which at a later period, 1835, he became for some short time the responsible editor, and in which he was for many years deeply concerned. His great work on Logic was published in 1843, and was at once received as a text book and authority, as well as the most lucid exposition of a science not usually attractive to the ordinary reader.

Connection with the "Examiner."

System of "Logic," 1843.

It was before this, however, that Mill made the acquaintance of Carlyle noted above, and that an incident occurred never to be forgotten in literary history. He had by this time attached himself to the lady then, and for many years after, the all-influential friend and mistress of his thoughts, and afterwards his wife—Mrs. Taylor, whom Carlyle speaks of not without a shade of ridicule as Platonica, with a not unnatural scoff at the unusual relationship which there is no reason to suppose was not entirely one of honour and innocence. To her Mill brought, as he brought everything, the manuscript of the first volume of Carlyle's French Rev-

Friendship with the Carlyles.

olution, which had been submitted to his friendly criticism by his own desire. It was at the moment when the Carlyles were struggling to establish their spare little household in London, and this book was the chief thing to which they looked to produce, not only a foundation of future possibilities, but actually their daily bread. One evening Mill made his appearance pale and haggard before the pair who welcomed him with their usual cordiality. He had the most appalling story too tell. He had taken the manuscript to Mrs. Taylor and she had left it without special precaution on a table. Carlyle was a new man, and perhaps his papers, the beginning of a new book which might appear to the careless critic as little important as that extraordinary rhapsody of "Sartor Resartus," which was then appalling and scattering the subscribers to "Fraser," did not seem to merit any special precautions. Mrs. Taylor's housemaid, naturally still more indifferent than her mistress, took the scattered sheets and made them useful in the way of lighting her fires. The whole volume was destroyed before it was discovered—and this was the terrible tale which Mill had to tell. Had it been left to Carlyle's biographer to imagine how the confession was received, we should probably have had a violent scene of reproach and denunciation. "Begone into the eternal darkness, you!" A throwing out of window, a kicking downstairs of the woe-begone and conscious culprit—and

Destruction of the manuscript of First vol. of the "French Revolution."

nobody could have been surprised had this been the result. The result was, however, that the husband and wife, exchanging one look of dismay at the dreadful news, immediately did their best to forget the effect of the catastrophe upon themselves, and to console the unfortunate man who was overwhelmed by his share in it. Mill was anxious, as may be supposed, to make up in every pecuniary way possible for this incalculable loss, and we believe that after some time Carlyle accepted from him a sum equivalent to its supposed market value, a hundred pounds, as a loan (which was afterwards rigorously repaid), to supply daily wants while the first volume was rewritten ; a transaction calculated to make the unfortunate cause of this trouble feel more humiliated and small, if possible, than before.

The result.

This tragic incident did not, however, interrupt the friendship on either side. It could not be expected to have sweetened the intercourse with the lady Platonica, upon whom Mrs. Carlyle was never unwilling to discharge a sharp-pointed arrow in passing from her swift and highly-strung bow.

Mill's great period of literary activity was in the early years of her Majesty's reign. His "System of Logic" was followed by "Essays on some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy" in 1844 ; on "Land Tenure" in 1847, and on "Political Economy" in 1848. In the year 1851, her previous ties being dissolved by death, he married Mrs. Taylor, and fondly attributed

"Principles of Political Economy," 1840.

His marriage.

"Essay on Liberty."

to her influence the works which he afterwards produced, beginning with the famous "Essay on Liberty," which is perhaps the one of his works most widely known, and which has influenced the greater number of readers. No longer in any point of view academical or scientific, he came by this work into the common field of literature—not indeed of literature pure and simple, but of that inspired by the universal science of abstract politics which is open to all men. It was a work which took the world by storm, and set multitudes of young imaginations aflame. His former works had established his reputation as a thinker, but the readers of a system of Logic must always be limited. The "Essay on Liberty" was fare for all. Nothing more luminous, more eloquent in the moderation and grace of a chastened style,—than this exposition of a principle, could well be. There is no doubt that to many minds it was a revelation, although not containing anything that could be called new.

"Subjection of Women," 1869.

Another work produced more distinctly under the auspices of his wife, cannot be said to have done him so much credit with the world. The curious, impassioned book called "The Subjection of Women," founded upon that view which is general to the warm antagonists of any unjust system of laws,—that all the dreadful consequences which evil-minded persons may work in its name are always in active and general existence, unmodified either by the character of

the time or the nature of things. It is one of those ways of thinking which are called feminine, and which are no doubt logical, but which produce many false conclusions, and have a general air of specious and fictitious accuracy very exasperating to the reader, who knows the argument to be unreal but cannot prove it to be false. "The Subjection of Women" was written upon the idea that all the laws in the statute-book against the independence and individuality of women were rigorously carried out, and that they had altogether escaped the operation of that well-known habit of English law, which is by many contrivances and by the continual action of good sense and natural feeling permitted to modify the letter of the severest enactment. In the same way there has been much fine writing and some genuine feeling roused by a late decision in respect to the right of a wife to leave her husband when she pleases—as if any legal right could make it a general thing for wives to forsake their husbands. Mill's work, however, though it brought him no credit, undoubtedly acted with many other arguments and proceedings equally unproductive of honour to the speakers and writers, in producing those great and beneficial alterations and new stipulations in law which have made the position of women so much more independent and worthy, and quenched so many cries of well-founded grievance in our own days. Mrs. Mill died in 1858, and her husband mourned her in the almost

A plea for the social and political rights of women.

Death of Mrs. Mill.

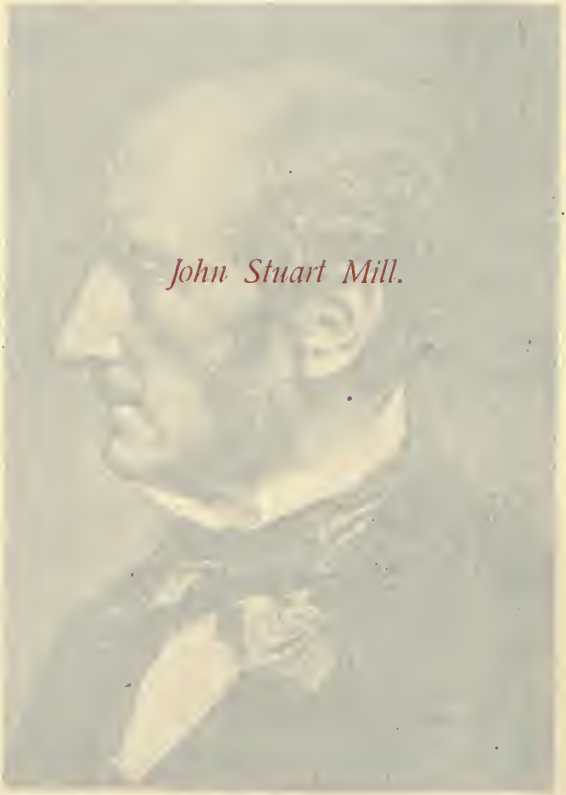
lyric sorrow of the latter portion of his autobiography, remaining devoted to her memory during all the rest of his life as he had been devoted to her influence and inspiration for many years before she became his wife.

Enters Parliament.

His after career was varied by a short and inauspicious entrance into public life. He entered parliament in 1865, but remained a member of the House of Commons only about three years, and though received with the respect due to his great reputation and powers, never attained any influence or standing there at all in proportion to that reputation. He published an exposition of "Utilitarianism"; of "Positivism," a collection of articles from the Edinburgh and Westminster Reviews; an "Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," and other smaller works in these years, and while in Parliament made some important speeches on such subjects as the new Reform Bill, and the reduction of the National Debt. But the most important work of his ending life was the "Autobiography," which presented him to the world in a light which the philosopher, the politician, the Utilitarian, the greatest of English Free-thinkers (so-called), and apostle of Negation, had never appeared in before unless to those who knew him intimately—that of a sensitive, gentle, almost visionary being, warped by its iron swaddling bands out of the development natural to it, contradicted in all its natural tendencies by

"Utilitarianism," 1863.
"Positivism," 1865.
"Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," 1865.

The "Autobiography."



John Stuart Mill.

an incredible and merciless education, and when these bands were removed, making haste to seek refuge in a sentimental subjection almost as wonderful as the preceding and involuntary bondage. The interested spectator, looking on at this remarkable self-revelation, is tempted to believe that the man so twisted and swayed by external influences would have found, had he been left to himself, a sustenance in religion, in poetry, in the aspirations of the Christian faith, for which he went wistfully looking all his life but never knew where to find. It is not often that we find a spirit so obviously forced into a different mould from that which was intended by nature. Generally the mind, struggling against these artificial ligatures, strikes into an almost exaggeration in opposition of its own natural bent and tendency. But Mill was seized upon in his very cradle, and the dutifulness and mildness of his soul helped to further the aims of those who worked into this mould of iron that ductile clay.

Revelation of his real nature repressed by Utilitarian education.

He died in Avignon in 1873, in profound retirement, never having recovered the blow of his wife's death, which had taken place so many years before, and making of his autobiography a sort of swan-song of praise to her. A great writer, a generous and fine thinker, a most lovable man, calling forth, however, we think, not more honour than pity, we can scarcely conclude this brief notice without an ache of the heart for the many deprivations which his

Died in 1873.

creed, and the ignorance imposed upon him, caused to his sensitive being, and a hope that he found something so much better than he had ever dreamt of in the darkness which was all that Death promised him, as to make up for every consolation which he had not had in his mortal career.

It has been mentioned that one of the houses in London into which the Carlyles where most cordially received, was that of the Austins, one of those brilliant families of which almost every member has one way or other achieved distinction. John Austin, the head of the house (born 1790, died 1849), a somewhat dreamy man of abstract mind but great intelligence, occupied for some time one of the chairs of law in the newly founded London University, and wrote a well-known and now standard book on Jurisprudence, which brought him, though slowly, a great reputation among those qualified to understand it. Much of his position in society and comfort in life was, however, owing to his wife, born a Taylor of Norwich, of a race which acquired unusual distinction, locally and socially, without, so far as appears, any particular reason, except that they were highly intelligent and hospitable people. Sarah Austin (born 1793, died 1867), held a special position in literature, such as at that time was held to be specially befitting to a woman. She did not pretend to be an original writer, notwithstanding some able articles in the "Edinburgh Review," chiefly on foreign subjects, but

John Austin, 1790–1849.

Sarah Austin, 1793–1867.

she was a translator of singular ability and success. In this way, she made known many of the more serious works of German literature, then so very much less understood than now, to the English public, and especially a most laborious undertaking, "Ranke's Lives of the Popes." Among higher subjects, she was the translator of the "Story without an End." Her steady work gave a sort of backbone of support to her less industrious though more original husband, whose lectures she edited after his death, with devotion equal to that which she had shown him during their long married life. Lucia Austin (1821–1869), afterwards Lady Duff Gordon, the friend, from her childhood, of Heine, and the author of some touching reminiscences of that poet, as well as of the sparkling and delightful "Letters from the Nile," which is her chief literary distinction, was the only child of this pair. And the mantle of those two highly instructed and eloquent women has fallen in this generation upon their descendant, Janet Duff Gordon, Mrs. Ross, who has with much filial piety and literary grace written memorials of both, in which a delightful, and in many respects touching, narrative of their lives is to be found.

Translation of "Ranke's Lives of the Popes."

Lucia Austin (Lady Duff Gordon), 1821–1869.

"Letters from the Nile."

The name of John Carlyle,—"the Doctor,"—who appears so constantly in the life of his distinguished brother, Thomas Carlyle, does not in that work play a very elevated part. But he has a certain place of his own in literature, through his remarkable and

John Carlyle.

almost literal translation in prose of the "Inferno" of Dante. He had intended to translate the entire poem, but only the first part was ever completed or given to the world. It is full of curious power and comprehension of the poet, strangely appearing in a mind otherwise anything but poetical.

John Sterling, 1806–1844.

Another slighter and unimportant but pathetic figure, which comes to the mind with the name of Carlyle and is inseparably associated with him, is that of John Sterling, who wrote little in his own person, and therefore is but lightly connected with literature, but who had the singular fortune to have two biographies written of his uneventful life, one of them insuring him a kind of immortality as being the production of Carlyle; the other already dropped into that oblivion whence it had indeed little right ever to be raised. He was the son of Edward Sterling, once the "Thunderer" of the *Times*, the man under whose influence that great newspaper became for a time the most curiously exact thermometer of public feeling in London, if not in England, and gained in consequence a unique place among newspapers, the tradition of which lasted for a long time, even after the reality failed. John Sterling, his son, was one of a band of young men who issued forth from Cambridge at the same time, and whose high spirituality of mind and dissatisfaction with the ordinary level of religious thought and doctrine, produced afterwards, chiefly through the leadership of Frederick

Denison Maurice, the movement generally called the Broad Church. Sterling himself, however, had little to do with this movement. He took Holy Orders, rather from an impulse of chivalry and desire to do what he could for the improvement of the world, than any more seriously considered motive, and was for a short time curate at Hurstmonceux, in Sussex, under his friend, Julius Hare : but remained for a very short time in that position, and afterwards, until his early death, led a vague sort of literary life without producing anything that is much worthy of mention. He was one of those men whose rare qualities of mind and personal utterance raise the highest hopes in the minds of their friends, and inspire with a sort of vague expectation, never carried out, the general public, which hears so many echoes of their names on all sides without hearing anything tangible on which to form an opinion. He was born in 1806, and died in 1844 ; his "Essays and Tales, with Life, by Archdeacon Hare," being published in London, 1848, while Carlyle's amended, or at least much different account of his life was published some years later. It is no small tribute to the interest of his character and being, that he should have so moved two such differing men.

"Essays and Tales, with Life, by Archdeacon Hare," 1848

The name of Sterling introduces another group of writers, some of whom belong more appropriately to the chapter devoted to Theology, though the name of one, a precursor rather than actor in the ecclesiastical

movement in which the others were engaged, may come in best here.

Julius Hare, 1795–1855.

Julius Hare, born in 1795, belonged to a family distinguished by a fatal fluency in letter-writing, so that the few facts in his career, the few works produced by him, and his beautiful character and life, so full of every grace of sweetness and courtesy, so irreproachable and graceful, are swamped by the flood of details, both intellectual and external, which a remorseless fidelity has gathered together. His position, or rather it would be well to say *their* position, since his name cannot be separated from that of his elder brother Augustus, born 1792, was a peculiar one. Not only did they belong to that peculiar class of "elegant scholars," to use an old form, which has come to a new development in this century in the universally cultured, gentle, exquisitely moral and virtuous University man, who has now become one of the features of English society, most profoundly unlike to the Parrs and Porsons of old, but their half foreign breeding and acquaintance with the literature of the modern world, especially the German, put a characteristic difference between them and their compeers in the earlier half of the century, which could scarcely exist now when European literature is within everybody's reach, and all people of education are expected to know something of Continental countries. The elegant vagrancy of the parents of these two men, which is evidenced in the birth of one at

Augustus Hare.

Wide acquaintance with the literature of the modern world.

Rome and the other near Bologna, was of a very different kind from that which carries ordinary members of society now over the length and breadth of the Continent, in a sort of whirlwind of Anglicism, retaining their own habits, their own surroundings, and their own language wherever they go. The young Hares were to all intents and purposes Italian children in their earliest years, and later acquired a sort of German nationality in the same way at Weimar, in the midst of the wonderful talk and circumstances of the Goethe circle. When this early expatriation was over they came back to the studies of English youth, in an atmosphere and among a crowd of relations deeply imbued with religious thoughtfulness and powers of reflection. They became accordingly, with all these modes of culture mingling in them, the first models of that exceedingly pure, elevated and fine, but perhaps slightly tedious type, which has since become an ideal of University life. Their characteristic was thoughtfulness rather than any power of thought, and their minds were so imbued with the wisdom of the ages and the inspiration of the thoughts of all other men who have ever reflected upon life and death, knowledge and ignoance, that little room was left for any original thinking of their own.

"Guesses at Truth, by Two Brothers," 1827.

Nevertheless their joint work, "Guesses at Truth, by Two Brothers," which was published in 1827, and of which an enlarged and corrected second edition

was one of the notable books of 1838, the beginning of our period, was at that period an important production. It is in the shape of aphorisms, some brief, as becomes that form of writing, others enlarged into short essays on abstract subjects, written well and agreeably, without any special grace of style, and chiefly notable in those days for the evidence of an all-pervading religious tone, which is unfortunately far from the habit of present discursive thinking. A whole world of difference in this respect will be observed by anyone who compares these broken lights of the reflective mind with the "Obiter Dicta," for instance, of a recent philosophising, not unlike in aim and principle. Julius Hare was in these early days much under the influence of Coleridge, sharing that semi-adoration of the poet-philosopher which inspired so many young men of the period. A beginning of the heterodoxy which was found afterwards in Maurice and Kingsley by the keen critics of the orthodox schools, was no doubt beginning to develop mildly in the Sermons of both brothers, published in 1839 and 1840. But they were both clergymen and most faithful sons of the Church of England, belonging to a highly characteristic school of her mild and refined divines.

Its quality and style.

A beginning of heterodoxy.

Julius Hare was the tutor of Sterling, Maurice, and Trench, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, at Cambridge. It was he who induced the former to enter the Church, and become his curate at Hurstmonceux,

and it was his life of Sterling in which the struggle of that vivacious spirit between Faith and Doubt was made to occupy the foremost place, which called forth the more remarkable life by Carlyle. He died Rector of Hurstmonceux, a family living, and Archdeacon of Lewes, in 1855.

Lesser writers on political and theosophical subjects.

Albany William Fonblanque.

In the circle of these greater names, though but faintly connected with them, occur those of Albany William Fonblanque, chiefly known as editor of the "Examiner" newspaper already referred to, to which Carlyle, Mill, and Stirling contributed ; and William Johnson Fox, who occupied a similar post in the "Westminster Review."

His work principally in connection with the "Examiner."

The former, Fonblanque, was a vigorous and graceful writer, though the articles which made the fortune of the "Examiner" and seemed to open in that paper a new genre in journalism, did not stand, as we hear on the authority of Lord Macaulay, the test of re-publication in a book. He was also a contributor to the "Westminster Review," but his name is chiefly connected with the paper which was in reality his creation, and which attracted the highest interest over the country, from the highest Liberal circles to the farm kitchen in Dumfriesshire, where Thomas Carlyle's family looked with excitement for every new number. Its success and the powerful support it gave to Liberal principles, secured in those days, when the support of literature was looked upon by successive governments as of more importance to

the State than it is now, the attention of the Whig leaders, and Fonblanque received an appointment as chief of the Statistical Department of the Board of Trade, a not unsuitable post for a writer on subjects chiefly political. He died in 1872. The "Examiner" survived for a considerable time, but never with anything of the power and authority that it had in his day.

W. J. Fox.

The life of W. J. Fox, once a familiar name in the busy annals of his time, has fallen more completely out of knowledge. It has been recalled, however, to the reader of to-day, by the recently published life of Robert Browning, in which he appears as the first critic and almost patron of the new poet. His life was a curious one, full of many vicissitudes. He rose from the humblest circumstances, educating himself by sheer energy and determination, and pressing on from the position of an errand boy to that of the minister of a dissenting congregation, with little help except from his own exertions. Literature was the staff by which he supported and pushed himself on to chapel after chapel, from the humility of a little Bethel in Chichester to a semi-fashionable pulpit in London, where his eloquence attracted many hearers. He had by this time become a Unitarian, adopting a creed always popular with the speculative, the resource of so many clever minds who wish to preserve a form of religion; but even in the freedom of that un-rigid faith did not find range enough, and

As a minister.

finally, after a good deal of literary work, threw himself into politics. He became Member of Parliament for Oldham in 1847, and as such his name was very well known for a number of years to the readers of the debates. He continued to write for the newspapers until his death in 1864, but has left nothing in literature, except by his connection with greater names, to preserve any memory of his own.

M. P. for Oldham, 1847.

There cannot be said to be even an artificial tie between the popular writer and well-known man of whom we are about to speak, and those above recorded, except that he was contemporary, though younger, with most of them, and that his productions are so varied that it is difficult to put him in any distinct class of his own. He was one of the class of writers whose primary occupation is official life, the restricted (as we should say) existence of the public office ; though among them has arisen so remarkable and important a writer as John Stuart Mill, a poet like Henry Taylor, a biographer like Spedding ; that curious and unlovely compiler of material for history, Henry Greville ; the excellent writer, critic, and editor, successor of Jeffrey, still happily with us, Henry Reeve, the editor of the "Edinburgh Review." Arthur Helps, the subject of the present notice, a man who has produced almost as much as the whole of them put together, though with very varying success, was born in 1817, educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was the

Men who have arisen from official life.

Sir Arthur Helps, 1817-1873.

contemporary and friend of Lord Tennyson, as well as of many other well-known men, and a member of the "Apostles" Society. He began life as secretary to several Ministers in succession, and early took up that crutch of literature which seems to come so natural to men in his position. "Essays written in the Intervals of Business," published in 1847; "Claims of Labour," 1844, were his first productions. In 1847 he began the publication of "Friends in Council," the work upon which his reputation is founded. It is a prolonged discussion of the questions most popular or most likely to move society, carried on by a succession of interlocutors, the caustic and critical Ellesmere being the chief speaker. It was in its time read everywhere and re-discussed on all hands, and is the kind of book which affords an always agreeable fare for the mildly intellectual, who love to feel themselves associated with high thinking, and capable of it, without too great a strain upon their intelligence, or necessity of an understanding beyond the level of the ordinary mind. To the mass of readers the debates and arguments of the "Friends," who turned over so many subjects, presented a new view of old truths, which gave to the most venerable questions an air of novelty, and even gentle dulness was able to believe itself victorious in argument when it agreed with one or other of the combatants. These combatants were not too sharply characterised or made too boldly into living personages : there was even a lady

"Essays written in the Intervals of Business," 1841. "Claims of Labour," 1844.

"Friends in Council," 1847–51.

A new view of old truths

among them kept to a strictly feminine position in the courteous strife ; and occasionally a touch of story by way of explaining the position which the sceptic took in respect to most human affairs or the amiability of his more Christian antagonist ; but nothing that could impair the dignity of the abstract or profane philosophy with any semblance of romance. The book was not addressed to either of the extremes of society, to specially literary circles, or to the butterfly reader who skims over everything presented to him. It addressed itself to the intellectual bourgeoisie, so to speak, the middle class of readers to whom the commonplace, clad in a specious robe of seemly words, is always more dear than anything else, and who are capable of making the fortune of any author who trusts in them. "Friends in Council" went accordingly into edition after edition. If it has a little faded now, after nearly fifty years, that is because the tone of such reasonings has changed considerably, even for that respectable and conservative crowd.

Addressed to the intellectual bourgeoisie.

Sir Arthur Helps, who became a K.C.B. in 1872, and received from Oxford the honor of D.C.L. in 1864, produced a numerous list of other works, some of superior quality. "The History of the Spanish Conquest in America," published in 1855-61, was a painstaking and careful piece of work. Of the same order was the "Conquerors of the New World," published between 1841 and 1855 and afterwards brought out sepa-

"History the Spanish Conquest in America," 1855–1861.

"Conquerors of the New World," 1841–1855.

rately in the form of independent lives of Columbus, Pizarro, Cortes, etc. He was also the author of one novel, "Realmah," a romance of the "Rasselas" kind, much expanded and adapted to the readers of the nineteenth century, who demand details and probabilities not thought of in an older time; and several plays, none of which, so far as we are aware, were ever produced on the stage. In 1862, while he held the position of Clerk of the Privy Council, a post which brought him within the personal acquaintance of the Queen, he was chosen by her Majesty to revise and edit the collected Speeches and Public Addresses of the Prince Consort; and was afterwards charged with the same office in respect to one of her Majesty's own works—"The Journals of Life in the Highlands," which were published in 1868 and 1869. His refined mind, excellent taste and experience, made this choice a happy one, as it was a distinction to his waning life, which closed amid an unusual activity of literary labor in 1875. His position in the world of letters was something of a paradox: he never rose to the highest sphere, yet was a universal favourite of the public, respected and merited every respect; and while treating the loftiest subjects in a manner considered by a mass of readers both original and striking, he never really in any of his works rose above the region of the respectable commonplace.

"Realmah."

Editor of the "Speeches and Public Addresses of the Prince Consort."

And of her Majesty's own works, "The Journals of Life in the Highlands."

George Borrow, whose name we place here for a reason very similar to that which has added Sir Arthur

George Borrow, 1803–1881.

Helps to the chapter, because it is very difficult to classify him, was as wildly irregular in his career as our previous subject was the reverse. He was one of the free-lances of literature, master of a sparkling and picturesque style, as of an adventurous and roving temper by stress of nature, and writing one of the most charming of discursive books of travel, as it might be by chance, with few traditions or prognostics in his favour. He was born in Norfolk in 1803, and was educated at Norwich, where he received some countenance and encouragement from the much celebrated society of intellectual persons who made of that picturesque town a little centre of intellectual activity in the beginning of the century. After an attempt to settle in a solicitor's office, a sphere which was not tempting to him, Borrow threw himself into that distressing kind of literary work which is pursued by so many who have little qualification for it, and whose struggling heads are often never seen above water during laborious years of an unthankful career. After thus working for a long time unknown—it is said that among other things, he was once employed upon an edition of the Newgate Calendar—he was engaged as a travelling agent by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and in the fulfillment of his duties travelled through Russia and Spain. The record of the latter journey, "The Bible in Spain," is one of the liveliest and most delightful of books of travel, full of graphic sketches of a then very little

A free-lance of literature.

"The Bible in Spain," 1842.

known country, and revelations of a genial, daring, adventurous nature, such perhaps as has seldom been employed on the errands of a religious society. That he had the highest interest and devotion however in that work, is clear from the fact that when in St. Petersburg he translated the New Testament into Manchoo, and afterwards the Gospel of St. Luke into the language of the gipsies, for which wandering people he seems to have been seized with the strongest predilection, so that the latter part of his life was entirely given up to them. "The Bible in Spain," which is the work by which his name is likely to be remembered, was published in 1842. After this his life and his productions take another colour. "Lavengro," a partly autobiographic work, in which the wild people with whom he had identified himself play the chief part, it being the story of a gentleman who joins the wandering tribes. "Romany Rye," a gipsy story, "Romano Lavo-Lil," a dictionary of the gipsy language, show by their names alone the direction of his thoughts. "The Gipsies in Spain," preceded his account of his adventures in the work of Bible distribution. The adventurous nature of the man found an outlet in this curious adoption of the interests and companionship of so peculiar a people. But his works upon this subject, though novel and strange and retaining much charm of style and personality, do not come up to the charm of his great work as a Bible-agent. He died in 1881—little known, or rather dropped altogether out of the knowledge of the world.

His predilection for the gipsies.

"Lavengro."

"Romany Rye."
"Romano Lavo-Lil."

"The Gipsies in Spain."

CHAPTER IV.

OF THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY, AND OF OTHER HISTORIANS AND BIOGRAPHERS IN THE EARLY PART OF THE REIGN.

Contrast between Carlyle and Macaulay.

It is hard to conceive a stronger contrast to the rugged and imposing figure of Carlyle than is presented by the other brilliant prose writer whose fame was already becoming known far and wide at her Majesty's accession, chiefly through his political work. In appearance, as in mind, in thought, purpose, and style, they are as far apart as the two poles. It would be extremely difficult to make anything like a heroic figure of Macaulay, or to surround him with even pseudo-romantic attributes; and, fortunately for him, it would be quite impossible for the most indiscreet admirer to give any but a pleasant picture of his domestic relations. He is perhaps to some people the less interesting for being a model of all the domestic virtues; indeed, an eminent writer of the present day has expressed his opinion that he was too good for any possibility of greatness. In thought lay perhaps the greatest difference of all. Not that Macaulay was disinclined to hero-worship of a kind, though the characters he would have

selected for that cult would scarcely have been Carlyle's favourites, but in every other respect their methods of thought were as different as Macaulay's polished sentences are opposed to the dithyrambic utterances of the prophet of Chelsea. Metaphysics Macaulay loathed; and, though there might be some sympathy between him and Carlyle in their common delight in history, their predilection was prompted by entirely different aims and worked out entirely different effects. Macaulay loved history, as one loves Shakespeare; it was to him, in the first and highest respect, an unending series of scenes enacted by really living personages with whom he sympathised or differed as he might have done with his personal friends or the political characters of his day. The great charm to him was in the story, a story of matchless interest and eternal freshness from the thousand various lights in which it might be studied, not an elaborate lesson on profound philosophical truths delivered *ex cathedra Naturæ*. And if he drew lessons for the day from his historical studies, they were not concerned with abstract principles, with the cruelty and foolishness of one half of the human race or the subjection and misery of the other, or with elementary truths which might have attracted attention "at the court of Nimrod or Chedorlaomer," but were rather received as practical teaching of political justice and expediency such as might be suited to the most modern questions.

Macaulay's love of history.

Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1800–1857.

Thomas Babington Macaulay was born at Rothley Temple in Leicestershire in the year 1800. His father, Zachary Macaulay, was an ardent abolitionist, and secretary to the company formed by that party for establishing colonies of emancipated negroes on the west coast of Africa. Of Tom Macaulay's childhood many curious stories are told,—of the precocious learning with which he not only undertook but carried out a "Compendium of Universal History," which in his mother's opinion gave "a tolerably connected view of the leading events from the Creation to the present time,"—of his poem in the style of the "Lay of the Last Minstrel,"—his hymns, which gained the approbation of no less a person than Mrs. Hannah More, and his odd sententious speech. He was educated originally at a small school at Little Shelford, near Cambridge, and afterwards at Trinity College, Cambridge. While at the university he distinguished himself as a speaker at the Union and also by his contributions to Charles Knight's "Quarterly," started about this time with Praed, Macaulay, Moultrie, Walker, and the Coleridges, as its principal contributors. This small periodical excited a good deal of kindly notice, and was favourably mentioned by Christopher North in the "Noctes" as a "gentlemanly miscellany, got together by a clan of young scholars, who look upon the world with a cheerful eye, and all its on-goings with a spirit of hopeful kindness." Among Macaulay's contributions were

Precocious learning and great memory.

"Ivry." his well-known poem of "Ivry" and many other pieces of verse, including some amatory lines in the first number which so shocked his father—who fortunately for Tom was unaware of the authorship—that he forbade him to have anything more to do with the publication. Fortunately, the decorous dulness of some succeeding numbers appeased the parental wrath, and Macaulay was allowed to take up his pen again. His principal prose contribution was a "Conversation between Mr. Abraham Cowley and Mr. John Milton touching the great Civil War," of which the author himself thought highly, and not without reason. The "Quarterly Magazine" did not have a very long existence, coming to an end in its second year, owing to disputes among the contributors.

Meanwhile Zachary Macaulay, who had set up in business with his brother-in-law, Thomas Babington, as an African merchant, had met with reverses, his mind being too much occupied by the anti-slavery cause to pay a due attention to business, and his partner being hardly equal to the conduct of affairs of such magnitude. When Tom Macaulay left college, he found his father practically ruined, and accepted the situation with perfect calmness and the determination to set matters right again by his own exertions, which, impossible as it seemed, he managed to achieve in a few years with the help of his brother Henry. His support of his family, however,

Restores the family fortunes.

was not limited to material services of this description; the charm of his presence among them seems to have done more than years of unselfish toil on their behalf could have effected to cheer and comfort their despondency. His attachment to his brothers and sisters, especially the latter, was devoted and reciprocal, and even the silent, austere father, broken down as he was by this last calamity, felt revived and encouraged by the presence of the son, who could talk politics with him over the breakfast table. A sketch given of him a short time before by his friend, Praed, may not be uninteresting. He is described as

His personal appearance.

> "A short manly figure, marvellously upright, with a bad neckcloth, and one hand in his waistcoat pocket. Of regular beauty he had little to boast; but in faces where there is an expression of great power, or of great good humour, or both, you do not regret its absence."

The homely features are said, indeed, to have been so thoroughly lit up by anything that awoke his interest, especially by that enthusiasm of talk which was his chief delight, as to compensate the absence of natural beauty.

To put himself in the way of doing something for himself and his family, Macaulay began to study for the bar, to which he was called in 1826. He was, however, perhaps more fitted to succeed in the world of literature, and, in this profession, an unexpected prospect now opened before him. A year or so be-

Called to the bar, 1826.

Macaulay becomes a contributor to the "Edinburgh."

fore, Jeffrey had written to a friend in London to make inquiries concerning any clever young man of Whig principles who could be found to assist him, as all the young men of Edinburgh were Tories. Macaulay was pitched upon as a likely contributor, and exerted himself to produce an article that would satisfy the dreaded editor of the "Edinburgh." The result was his essay on Milton, suggested by Charles Sumner's edition of the newly discovered treatise, "De Doctrina Christiana." We do not profess any particular admiration for this paper, which appears to us to be marked by a flashy and florid exuberance of diction which we are not accustomed to find in his "Essays," and a general air of immaturity not unnatural to his age, and perhaps increased by a measure of timidity in a young author approaching for the first time one of the great pachas of literature, though we admit that timidity was not an ordinary characteristic of Macaulay. The article, however, was received with immense applause on all sides, Jeffrey being particularly enthusiastic. "I cannot conceive," he wrote to Macaulay, "where you picked up that style."

"Milton" suggested by "De Doctrina Christiana."

The profession of literature now open to Macaulay.

The path of literature was now open to Macaulay, but it can hardly be said that he followed it with great success for the next year or two. With the temerity of an untried writer, he sought someone to attack whom wiser men than he admired. The Utilitarian school of philosophy offered a conspicuous

and easy mark, and against this he directed the whole force of his pen in a series of articles which he afterwards regarded with a certain shame and refused to republish. The objectionable philosophy including in his mind the philosophers, he delivered a similar onslaught against James Mill's "History of British India," for which, in the preface to his collected "Essays," he afterwards made a manly apology, congratulating himself on the fact which he insisted "ought to be known, that Mr. Mill had the generosity, not only to forgive, but to forget the unbecoming acrimony with which he had been assailed, and was, when his valuable life closed, on terms of cordial friendship with his assailant." Indeed Macaulay, though not a malevolent, or even a naturally uncharitable man, was too ready to form an unkindly judgment of his political adversaries. The opinion of Sir Walter Scott, expressed by him in a letter to Macvey Napier, astounds us by its narrowness and prejudice, and we are certain that if anyone had told him that his constant opponent, Crocker, had any one good quality in his composition, honest, kind-hearted Macaulay would have been quite unable to believe it. To the enemy who made amends he could, indeed, be reconciled. His fury at the attacks made upon him in "Blackwood" expressed itself in a studied affectation of scorn and that rueful laugh which is described in unclassical English as proceeding from the wrong side of the mouth; but when his old enemy,

Writings against the Utilitarian school of philosophy.

Onslaught against Mill's "History of British India," and his subsequent apology.

Narrowness and prejudice against political adversaries.

Wilson, to whom such magnanimity was no effort, gave unmingled praise to the "Lays of Ancient Rome," Macaulay was most anxious that he should be assured of the author's appreciation of the criticism. However, Macaulay's polemics were not his only, nor his best, work in the first few years of his writing for the "Edinburgh." In 1827 appeared his masterly study of Machiavelli, perhaps chiefly remembered for the almost casuistical ingenuity of his apology for that great writer's cynical theories regarding treachery and assassination. The following year was marked by his admirable essay on Hallam's "Constitutional History."

Machiavelli, 1827.

"Essay on Hallam's Constitutional History," 1828.

In the good old days of patronage, literary merit had fifty times the chance of recognition that it can possibly have now, and Macaulay was not long in receiving a substantial token of the admiration felt for his genius. In 1828 the Lord Chancellor, Lord Lyndhurst, appointed him to a Commissionership of Bankruptcy. Two years later Lord Lansdowne, having a pocket borough to bestow, thought it could not be better represented than by this clever young literary man, who accordingly entered Parliament as member for Calne in 1830. His first speech in the House of Commons, on the question of Reform, established his fame as a parliamentary orator. Perhaps the greatest tribute to the position which he at once acquired in the House was the fact that no speech of Macaulay's was allowed to pass without

Enters Parliament as member for Calne, 1830.

First speech on Reform establishes his fame as a parliamentary orator.

an answer, a leading debater of the Opposition always rising to reply when he sat down. A bill was brought in about this time to reform the Bankruptcy system, which, among other changes, destroyed the small office held by Macaulay; he however voted for the bill, which was passed. In 1832 he was appointed Secretary to the East Indian Board of Control, and two years later was offered a post on the Supreme Council for India, with a large salary, which, though he had just been returned to the reformed Parliament for the new constituency of Leeds, he did not feel justified in refusing. He therefore sailed for India in 1834 and remained there for four years. His chief work while in Calcutta was done as President of the Committee of Public Instruction, and of the committee which was appointed to draw up a Penal Code, and a Code of Criminal Procedure. The former code, in the preparation of which he took much the greatest share, though it is now believed that his colleagues, especially Sir John Macleod, rendered him considerable assistance, is one of his most enduring titles to fame. During the period of his expatriation, he continued to contribute to the "Edinburgh Review" the essays upon Sir James Mackintosh's "History of the Revolution," and upon Lord Bacon.

Appointed to the Supreme Council for India.

Sails for India, 1834.

The Indian Penal Code one of his most enduring titles to fame.

Essays on Sir James Mackintosh's "History of the Revolution," and upon Lord Bacon.

A great grief awaited Macaulay when he returned home full of joy and hope to those whom he had left behind. The household had been a sad one in

Return from India, 1838.

his absence. "It is as if the sun had deserted the earth," wrote one of his sisters, while he was away; and Macaulay himself felt the separation as keenly, though his incessant toil in India was on behalf of those he loved, to restore the fallen fortunes of his family. As soon as he had conquered in his struggle to attain this end, he returned to England with "a small independence, but still an independence;" but the home he arrived at was a house of mourning. Worn out in mind and body, with the bitter feeling to one who had been a man of action, of helplessness and dependence, even on his own son, allying itself with his bodily ailments, Zachary Macaulay had died about a month before his son's return. It was, perhaps, to distract his mind from this sorrow that Macaulay, after a few weeks' stay in England, during which he dashed off one of his most brilliant essays, that on Sir William Temple, for the "Edinburgh," betook himself to Italy, where he remained for some months. On his return, early in 1839, he at once devoted himself to his work with renewed energy. His first duty was to the "Edinburgh," for which he wrote a trenchant, yet not unkindly, criticism of a somewhat reactionary treatise on the relations of Church and State, by "A young man of unblemished character and of distinguished Parliamentary talents, the rising hope of the stern, unbending Tories,"—the young member for Newark, William Ewart Gladstone. Macaulay speaks with some severity of the

Zachary Macaulay's death before his son's return.

Essay on Sir William Temple.

Resides in Italy for some months.

Trenchant criticism of Gladstone's treatise on the relations of Church and State.

views expressed by Mr. Gladstone, but kindly of the young man himself; he was too good a judge of men to harbour any prejudice against the extreme views of youthful genius. In the same year, Macaulay was invited to stand for Edinburgh, and was returned practically without opposition. Lord Melbourne, the Prime Minister of the day, was glad to strengthen a fallen Government by the support of so brilliant a debater, and Macaulay was appointed Secretary of War, with a seat in the Cabinet. He held this appointment till the fall of the Ministry, two years later, after which time, with the exception of a short period in the years 1846-47, during which he was Paymaster-General under Lord John Russell's administration, he never again accepted office.

Appointed Secretary of War, 1837.

He continued in Parliament, however, and was still busy as a contributor to the "Edinburgh Review," but neither a political career nor periodical literature seemed to offer a sufficiently wide scope for his genius. He was anxious to achieve some really great literary work, and had already laid out the plan of a great historical book, extending from the reign of James II. "down to the time which is within the memory of men still (1840) living." We all know that this great work was never finished, nor are we sure that it is to be greatly regretted. It has been calculated that if the whole period had been recorded with as much care and labour as Mac-

Plans a great historical work, of which only a part was finished.

aulay spent upon the fragment which he completed, the work could not have been in less than fifty volumes, which, at the rate of progress habitual to the writer, must have occupied a hundred and fifty years. The only chance of completing it would, therefore, have been by omitting the labour and research which made the work move slowly, and furnishing us with a hasty and superficial sketch of the whole, instead of the vivid and complete picture of a part which has been left to us. Such a consummation could not be desired by anyone.

"Lays of Ancient Rome," 1842.

Received with great enthusiasm, they have never lost their popularity.

The "History," however, could not yet be got in hand. Macaulay's first production was the one which has, perhaps, made his name more widely known than any others, the "Lays of Ancient Rome." The chorus of enthusiastic applause with which the "Lays," were received—Macaulay's veteran adversary, Christopher North, shouting with the loudest, —has not, perhaps, been uniformly echoed by the critics of latter days ; but with the far more important audience which lies outside the little circle of self-appointed judges, and accepts their judgments when it agrees with them, they have never lost their popularity. Every schoolboy knows them, to use a favourite phrase of Macaulay's own, though schoolboys are not usually partial to poetry,—but to the minstrelsy of Scott or Macaulay—it is much to mention them together—no healthy-minded boy refuses to listen ; nor should we think much for the

boy who could not declaim some of the fiery sentences of Icilius, or describe exactly the manner of death of Ocnus or Aruns, Seius or Lausulus. Of older readers it is less necessary to speak, as he who has known Macaulay's Lays in his childhood has no occasion to refer to them again. There is an unfading charm in the swing and vigour of the lines which bring to our ears the very sounds of the battle, the clash of steel and the rushing of the horses, "the noise of the captains and the shouting." "A cut-and-thrust-style," Wilson called it, "without any flourish. Scott's style when his blood was up, and the first words came like a vanguard impatient for battle." The praise is scarcely extravagant.

Unfading charm in the swing and vigour of the lines.

At the same time Macaulay was hard at work collecting his various "Essays" for republication. He had not wished to do this, considering it unadvisable to tempt criticism with a volume of occasional papers, however successful they might have been in a magazine; but the importation of pirated American editions left him no choice, and the collection was published in 1843. It was received with enthusiasm and at once attained a popularity which it has never since lost, and which certainly no collection of the kind has ever equalled. There is some reason to doubt the expediency of republications of this description, though they are certainly the means of preserving the fame of a periodical writer for future generations; and there are perhaps few cases in

Critical and Historical "Essays," 1843.

No other collection of the kind has ever equalled their popularity.

which they have any chance of becoming popular. We are accustomed to find collected essays or articles among the collected works of every eminent modern writer, but the volumes which contain them are usually the least read. But Macaulay's Essays have achieved for themselves a position in popular literature as a work which everyone delights to read, not for conscience' sake or duty, but merely as a thing to be enjoyed, which it may well be said no other essayist has equalled. They are so well known that any kind of detailed criticism would be superfluous; nor, as everyone has his own favourites, would it be of any great use to make selections from among them. Yet we will own to caring least for those which deal with the political questions of the day and most for those of a historical, or still more biographical character. The ease and charm of the narrative in such favourite essays as those on Clive and Warren Hastings, cannot but be felt even by those who are most inclined to differ with Macaulay's estimate of his subjects. To us there is an even greater attraction in the light and yet elaborate studies of character as demonstrated in action, such as are contained in the papers upon Sir William Temple and on Addison, or in the more weighty essays upon the Earl of Chatham—brilliantly begun in comparatively early life, before the writer went to India, and continued ten years later with greater force and solidity of judgment towards the end of

The position they have achieved in popular literature.

Historical preferred to the Political essays.

his career as a periodical writer,—to which a fitting complement may be added by the masterly biography of the younger Pitt supplied by Macaulay to the Encyclopædia Britannica and reprinted with his other contributions on Atterbury, Bunyan, Goldsmith and Johnson, by Mr. Adam Black, the publisher, after the author's death.

Masterly biography of the younger Pitt.

Macaulay was now becoming impatient of the various occupations which prevented him from getting to work on his long-projected history. In 1844 he definitely closed his connection with the "Edinburgh," which he had lately felt to be a great drag on him, having contributed only two more articles —those on Frederick the Great and Madame d'Arblay, respectively,—after the publication of the collected "Essays." All this time he was attending to his Parliamentary duties, and some of his most telling speeches were delivered in the Parliament of 1841–47. His appointment as Paymaster-General in 1846 obliged him to seek re-election at the hands of his constituents, and, though no longer unopposed, as in 1841, he was returned by a triumphant majority over his adversary, Sir Culling Eardley Smith. Much sectarian opposition, however, had been excited against him by his action on the question of the grant to Maynooth College, and at the general election in 1847, to the lasting shame of the constituency, Macaulay lost his seat. Wilson, his old literary adversary and political opponent, had risen

Closes his connection with the "Edinburgh Review," 1844.

Biographical "Essays" on Frederick the Great and Madame d'Arblay.

Macaulay loses his seat in Parliament in 1847 owing to his action on the question of the grant to Maynooth.

from a sick-bed to record his vote for the victim of what was generally felt to be an unjust persecution, and the public sympathy was freely expressed, but Macaulay himself apparently did not feel the loss. It gave him, at any rate, a great deal of additional leisure to devote to his "History," which was now so far advanced that the two first volumes were ready for publication in the ensuing year.

First two volumes of "History of England," from the Accession of James II, 1848.

The success of the "History of England" from the first day of its appearance was phenomenal. A first edition of three thousand copies was exhausted in ten days, a second of the same size was entirely bought up by the time it appeared, and a third of five thousand was so nearly exhausted six weeks after the original issue, that it was found necessary to print two thousand additional copies to meet the immediate demand. The excitement aroused by its appearance may be to some extent estimated by the fact that the Society of Friends thought it necessary to send a deputation to remonstrate with Macaulay for the view he had taken of William Penn. The honest Quakers were no match for the brilliant dialectician, who successfully reasserted his views on the subject, but it has since been proved that they had the right on their side. Lockhart wrote to Croker, who was waiting to measure out to Macaulay such criticism as had been meted to his own edition of Boswell in days gone by,—that he had read the "History" through "with breathless interest," but

Its success phenomenal.

admitted that it contained so many inaccuracies that the greatest injury would be done to the author's feelings by telling the simple truth about his book. Croker, however, wrote so savage a review that, in face of the general public approval, it hardly excited any notice at all, though his strictures were hardly more severe than the criticisms of many later writers. For the time, however, opposition was hopeless, and the chorus of approval was hardly broken by one dissentient voice. Macaulay himself told an amusing anecdote illustrating its popularity at the time. "At last," he wrote to his friend, T. F. Ellis: "I have attained true glory. As I walked through Fleet Street the day before yesterday, I saw a copy of Hume at a bookseller's window with the following label: 'Only £2 2s. Hume's History of England in eight volumes, *highly valuable as an introduction to Macaulay!*'"

Croker writes a savage review.

Whatever may be its value as a correct record of fact, Macaulay's "History" is certainly a very remarkable production of literary art. It is perhaps one of the greatest efforts in narrative that has ever been made. From beginning to end we have a vast history—in the original sense of the word which we usually denote by lopping the first syllable—flowing on in a perfectly unbroken stream, the thousand little rivulets that converge into the main flood neither neglected nor magnified into undue importance, but firmly and skilfully guided into their proper places as

The absolute continuity of the story and the masterly sketches of character.

the component parts of a great whole. Nothing is more striking in Macaulay's work than this absolute continuity of story. There is no lack of adornment, of literary grace of style and picturesque detail, nor is there any point in which Macaulay's genius is more amply displayed than in the masterly, if occasionally prejudiced, sketches of character with which the "History" is interspersed; but everything is subordinated to the central necessity of allowing no break or obstacle to the narrative. Thus we get those exquisite little portraits in miniature which Macaulay threw in with such wondrous skill when he had to present a new character upon the scene whose antecedents or peculiarities it was necessary to know, but whom there was no time to describe at length. Even the more finished and elaborate studies of individuals hardly distract the attention from the main story longer than it would take a reader to turn aside from the text of his book to look at a full page illustration; and these are only given when required as a foundation of knowledge on the subject, to give some idea what manner of man is presented before the audience; for as to the real character of each actor, he will soon show that in the only reliable manner, by his actions. Macaulay's enemies are accustomed to say that these characters are only drawn with exactitude when it suits his partisan purposes to make them true; otherwise they are exaggerated by partiality or discolored by prejudice, and the story

Adverse critics say that the work is discoloured by prejudice and exaggerated by partiality.

of their lives is told in such a manner as accords with the political views of the writer. To our mind such charges are brought on too general a scale; but we are obliged to admit that in some cases they are not without foundation. We have already said that Macaulay often found it hard to do justice to his political adversaries, and we cannot contend that he was more impartial in the matter of statesmen of days long gone by, to whose principles or conduct he was opposed. To him the men of the court of James II. were as real and living as those among whom he lived; and among the former, as the latter, he supported his friends and attacked his enemies. He hated Marlborough as he hated Croker; he spoke his hatred out, as was his nature, and he refused to see any redeeming points in the character of either adversary; we may say, indeed, that he was incapable of seeing them. We will not even deny that in the heat of his animosity he may have distorted facts; for every student of history knows with what readiness those elastic trifles will assume all varieties of shape according to the glasses through which they are observed. But these, at the worst, are in a few extreme instances, for which we at least are ready to forgive one of the only historians who has been able to make his readers live in the period of which he writes.

Incapable of seeing redeeming points in the character of an adversary.

Coloured as his narrative may be, it is yet history, and history of the most profitable kind. The lecture-

dried student, whose interest in history only tends to the answering of questions at an examination, or at best to endowing posterity with a set of cut and dried annals for the benefit of future candidates for honours, finds little use in Macaulay. He says both too much and too little, and is too entertaining for the conscientious reader to study in working hours. It is like Partridge's judgment on the theatre, when he preferred the king in Hamlet, who was so obviously acting a part, to the quiet, little man, Garrick, who spoke and moved as an ordinary mortal might have done. No one could possibly read one of Dr. Gardiner's valuable works without feeling that he was studying history; when we read Macaulay, on the other hand, we feel more like the spectators of a great natural drama unrolling itself before our eyes. We are not even hearing the story told by one of the actors, but actually looking on at what is taking place. This, is to our mind the great superiority of Macaulay's work over those of more exact historians. Perhaps we may take an illustration of our meaning. Suppose that we wished to form a correct idea of St. Peter's at Rome or St. Mark's at Venice. There are numberless works in which we could find exactly measured designs of the plan, elevations and sections of the buildings, from which we might gain a great deal of practical knowledge and be able to impart it to others. But would anyone suggest that we should thus get anything like so real an idea of

Macaulay's work like the unrolling of a drama before our eyes.

This the superiority of Macaulay's work over more exact historians.

St. Peter's as could be derived from seeing one great picture of the whole, even if the artist had made the façade a yard too long or the cupola a couple of feet too high. So in Macaulay's great picture of the past, the reader can see at a glance more of the real life of the world as it was, than the most toilsome examinations of historical evidence can afford him. Not that we undervalue the latter. When the reader has taken in the sense and the story of the picture, by all means let him go and verify his measurements.

Illustration by example.

There is not very much more of Macaulay's life to record. The third and fourth volumes of the History were published in 1855, and the fifth and last was not finished at his death. It was a great disappointment to him to be unable to carry it further on, at least to the reign of Anne. In 1853 he was induced to make a collection of his speeches for reasons similar to those which had led to the publication of the Essays. His parliamentary duties were resumed for a while, for Edinburgh had repented in sackcloth and ashes, and, on the resignation of his old colleague, Sir William Gibson Craig, put him at the head of the poll, though he was not able to be present to conduct the contest in person. His health, however, was failing, and, after being many times over-persuaded by his constituents, he insisted on resigning his seat in 1856. The next year he was raised to the peerage as Baron Macaulay of Rothley. He still worked at his History in his latter years and con-

The third and fourth volumes of the History 1855. The fifth published after his death.

Raised to the peerage as Baron Macaulay of Rothley. 1857.

tributed to the Encyclopædia Britannica the articles of which we have spoken. His last days were peaceful, though somewhat overclouded by melancholy, and his end was peace itself, the gentle and easy transition that comes to some who scarcely seem to die but merely cease to breathe. Perhaps this was the end of Enoch; Macaulay died in the last days of the year 1857, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, in Poet's Corner, at the feet of the statue of Addison.

Died in 1857.

Among the historical writers of the early part of the reign there is certainly none who can put forward any claim to such eminence as Macaulay, at least among those who devoted themselves to the study of the annals of their own country; but there was no lack of diligent and conscientious writers who made valuable contributions to this branch of literature. A deservedly conspicuous figure, at the commencement of the reign, as a leader of historical research, was that of Sir Francis Palgrave, Deputy Keeper of the Records. Born in 1789, the son of a wealthy Jewish merchant, Francis Cohen—to give him his original name—at first devoted himself to legal studies, first as a solicitor and afterwards at the bar to which he was called in 1827. He had assumed on his marriage the name of Palgrave, which was that of his wife's mother. He was already known as the writer of some remarkable papers on historical antiquities, and the editor of a collection of "Parliamentary Writs" for the Record Commission, on whose behalf he con-

Sir Francis Palgrave, 1789–1861.

Editor of a collection of "Parliamentary Writs" for the Record Commission.

tinued for many years to do much excellent work, rising to the position of Deputy Keeper in 1838. His work, however, was not limited to productions of this official nature. Devoting himself with the ardour of a true student to the search for historic truth, he directed his attention to those obscurer portions of our early history, of which previous writers had been wont to accept, without inquiry, any idle, half-legendary account which presented itself. In his "History of England during the Anglo-Saxon Period" (1831), and of the "Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth" during the same period (1832), and, finally, in his greatest work, the "History of Normandy and England" (1851-64), Palgrave made the first really critical inquiry into the earlier ages of English history, and even had he achieved less himself, would be worthy of high praise for his services as a pioneer in clearing the ground for those who came after. His "History of Normandy and England," which was not completed at his death in 1861, is, however, a work of acknowledged merit.

"History of England during the Anglo-Saxon Period," 1831.

"Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth," 1832.

"History of Normandy and England," 1851–1864.

Not completed at his death in 1861.

A writer of less real merit, but perhaps more widely known, whose principal work was in progress at the time of the Queen's accession, was Sir Archibald Alison. Born in 1792, in a Shropshire village, of which his father—the author of an "Essay on Taste," which received some praise in its day—was incumbent, of good Scotch blood on both sides, Alison was educated at Edinburgh University and called to the Scot-

Sir Archibald Alison, 1792–1867.

tish bar in 1814. His success in the legal profession is evidenced by his appointment as Advocate Depute, and afterwards as Sheriff of Lanarkshire—in which important post he acted with equal ability and vigour during a very critical period—and also by his treatise upon "Criminal Law" (1832-33), which is still a standard work in Scotland. In 1829 he commenced his chief historical work on the "History of Europe, from the Commencement of the French Revolution in 1789 to the Restoration of the Bourbons in 1815," the first two volumes of which were published in 1833, and the tenth and last in 1842. Ten years later he added a continuation of the history in six more volumes, bringing it down to the year 1852. This voluminous work, though ill-treated by the critics, was strangely popular in its day, and, setting style, prejudices and reflections on one side, it undoubtedly has its value as a full and continuous record of events in the period with which it deals. Among Alison's other works were his "Principles of Population" (1840), the "Life of John, Duke of Marlborough," (1847), the "Lives of Lord Castlereagh and Charles Stewart, Marquesses of Londonderry" (1861), and an "Autobiography," chiefly written in the years 1851-52, but only published after his death, which occurred in 1867. He was a constant contributor to "Blackwood" and a Tory in politics. His political views, joined to his personal popularity, caused him to be elected Lord Rector of Marischal College, Aber-

"Criminal Law," 1832-3.

"History of Europe from the Commencement of the French Revolution 1789 to the Restoration of the Bourbons in 1815."

"Principles of Population," 1840.

The "Life of John, Duke of Marlborough," 1847.

"Lives of Lord Castlereagh and Charles Stewart," 1861.

An "Autobiography," 1867.

Lord Rector of Aberdeen University,

deen, against Macaulay in 1845, and of Glasgow University against Lord Palmerston in 1851.

1814; and of Glasgow University, 1851.

A historian who ought to have achieved a much greater position than either of the writers we have quoted was Philip Henry, fifth Earl of Stanhope, better known in literature by the title of Lord Mahon, which he bore by courtesy during his father's lifetime. Born in 1805, and educated at Christ Church, Mahon entered Parliament at an early age and sat there for many years without greatly distinguishing himself, though Sir Robert Peel gave him some minor offices to hold at different times. His first start in literature was with a "Life of Belisarius," published in 1829, to which succeeded his principal works, the "History of the War of the Succession in Spain" (1832), and the "History of England from the Peace of Utrecht" (1837–52). His merits as a painstaking and judicious historian would be more generally recognised, had he possessed greater skill as a writer. This quality, however, was unfortunately denied to him, and we can only speak with commendation of what his work might have been if it had been one degree less ill written. Setting aside the power of expression, he had almost all the qualities necessary for a good historian. Among his many other works were the "Court of Spain under Charles II." (1844), "Life of the Great Condé" (1845), "History of the Rise of our Indian Empire" (1858), and "Life and Correspondence of William Pitt" (1861–62); he was also a

Lord Mahon, afterwards Earl of Stanhope, 1805–1875.

"Life of Belisarius," 1829.

"History of the War of Succession in Spain," 1832.

"History of England from the Peace of Utrecht," 1837–52.

"Court of Spain under Charles II.," 1844.

"Life of the Great Condé," 1845.

"History of the Rise of our Indian Empire," 1858.

"Life and Correspondence of William Pitt," 1861–62.

Elected President of the Society of Antiquaries, 1846.

frequent contributor to the "Quarterly Review." The estimation in which his talents were held may be judged by his election as President of the Society of Antiquaries in 1846, as Lord Rector of the University of Aberdeen in 1858, and Chairman of the National Portrait Gallery—in the foundation of which he took a leading part—in 1857. He died in 1875.

Died in 1857.

A singularly different figure comes before us, in this review of historians, in the author of a work, originally projected by Charles Knight, the "History of the Thirty Years' Peace," succeeding the battle of Waterloo. Harriet Martineau, born at Norwich in 1802, of a French Huguenot family, which had provided several generations of skilled surgeons to that city, after making an early start in literature with a book of "Devotional Exercises for the Young," published in 1823, devoted her time chiefly to a series of tales with a moral, illustrative of political economy, of which "The Rioters" (1826), is perhaps the best known. Miss Martineau was in early life a Unitarian —of which sect her brother, Dr. James Martineau, of whom we shall have occasion to speak in another place, is still one of the most eminent professors— and among her early successes were some prize essays on religious subjects published by a society of that persuasion. To her first set of tales, which were entitled "Illustrations of Political Economy," succeeded others under the general head of "Poor Laws and Paupers," and "Illustrations of Taxation."

Harriet Martineau, 1802–1876.

"Devotional Exercises for the Young," 1823.

"The Rioters," 1826.

"Illustrations of Political Economy."

"Poor Laws and Paupers," 1833.

"Illustration of Taxation," 1834.

Harriet Martineau.

These narratives, of a curiously prosaic and commonplace character, and discussing subjects—such, for instance, as the appropriation and cultivation of Commons, on which public opinion has entirely changed since their day—quite unfit for such treatment, had nevertheless an astonishing popularity. In the year of the Queen's accession, Miss Martineau published a book on "Society in America," containing the impressions of a recent tour in the United States. Two years later came her first novel, "Deerbrook," a work of considerable merit, which was followed in 1840 by "The Hour and the Man," a courageous attempt to whitewash the savage negro leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture. The next few years of her life were devoted to those tales for children on which, perhaps, her most lasting title to fame will rest, the "Settlers at Home," and the ever-delightful "Feats on the Fiord." There were more tales also with a political moral, on the Game Laws this time. Miss Martineau's sympathies were with the people, to use the consecrated phrase which generally denotes a violent antipathy to all classes not belonging to the poorest quarter of that great whole, and her teaching is often unsound; but the stories proved to be admirably adapted to the audience addressed, and as the literary vehicle of the views to be inculcated. The "History of the Thirty Years' Peace, 1816–1846," which was published in 1850, is to our mind less successful. It is by no means so interesting as one

"Society in America," 1837.

"Deerbrook," 1839.

"The Hour and the Man," 1840.

"Settlers at Home."

"Feats on the Fiord."

"History of the Thirty Years' Peace, 1816–1846," 1850.

would have expected from the writer of such clever stories; it goes slowly, and drags on its way, and its movements are conducted in a kind of atmosphere of mild preachment, which the ordinary reader will find somewhat enervating. In later life Miss Martineau became a Positivist, and published an abridgment of Comte's Philosophy. The principal work of her later life, however, next to the "History," was her "Household Education," which originally appeared in the "People's Journal;" she also contributed frequently to the "Daily News" and "Once a Week." She died in 1876; an "Autobiography" which she left unfinished being published after her death.

Abridgment of Comte's Philosophy, 1853.

"Household Education."

"Autobiography," published after her death.

Other writers who have made less mark in the world devoted themselves to the history of Scotland, for a really valuable and interesting account of which the world has yet to wait. Among the inquirers into this difficult subject we should give special prominence to Cosmo Innes (1798–1874), known as the author of a number of valuable essays on the early history of the Scottish people—not merely the barbarous chieftains and henchmen who grieved the soul of Carlyle:—as the editor of many ancient documents for the Bannatyne, Maitland, and other antiquarian societies, and as Professor of History in Edinburgh University. The still obscurer annals of the extreme North were the subject of more than one work of merit at the commencement of the reign, the

Writers devoted to the history of Scotland.

Cosmo Innes, 1798–1874.

chief of which were the "Highlanders of Scotland," published in 1837 by Mr. William Forbes Skene, now her Majesty's Historiographer in Scotland, and the equally interesting and more weighty "History of the Highlands and of the Highland Clans," by Dr. James Browne (1793–1841), best known in his own days as an excessively combative journalist. For those who do not seek for very solid information there is some attraction in the pleasing though superficial sketches entitled "Lives of the Queens of England from the Norman Conquest" (1840–49)—afterwards supplemented by "Lives of the Queens of Scotland and English Princesses, connected with the Regal Succession of Great Britain" (1850–59)—by Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland. More value is attached to the "Lives of the Princesses of England" (1849–55), by Mrs. Mary Anne Everett Green, a lady who has done much good work for the Record Commission, and whose name as a historical scholar stands deservedly high. Another lady who also devoted herself to the study of English history was Miss Lucy Aikin (1781–1864), whose "Memoirs of the Court of Queen Elizabeth," published in 1818, gained a fleeting popularity not accorded to later similar sketches of the courts of James I. and Charles I. Miss Aikin produced in 1843 a "Life of Addison," best known by Macaulay's essay thereupon, and wrote memoirs of her father, Dr. John Aikin, and her aunt, Mrs. Barbauld, which later

William Forbes Skene.

Dr. James Browne, 1793–1841.

Lesser writers on English History are—

Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland.

Mary Anne Everett Green.

Lucy Aikin, 1781–1864.

works alone come within our period. Among writers of similar *mémoires pour servir*, we should mention the name of John Heneage Jesse (1815–1874), a dabbler in court history at various periods from Richard III. to George III., and the author of a work on "London : its Celebrated Characters and Places," which would be more valued were it not for the concurrence of the better known "Handbook" of Peter Cunningham. His father, Edward Jesse (1780–1868), was the author of some successful "Anecdotes of Dogs" and other works on natural history.

John Heneage Jesse, 1815–1874.

Edward Jesse, 1780–1868.

Writers of ancient history.

A more remarkable group of men is brought before us when we turn to that division of literature which bears the somewhat loose technical term of ancient history. The names of Dr. Arnold, Dean Milman, Bishop Thirlwall, and Mr. Grote are known in a larger field than even that of literature, though it is only in their quality of writers that we are called upon to judge of them. From our point of view, Dr. Arnold, for instance, is not the great Head Master of Rugby, but the much less important historian of Rome. With this apology, which must be taken to apply to a number of personages mentioned in various parts of this work, we may give such particulars of their careers as are necessary to the comprehension of their position in literature.

Thomas Arnold, 1795–1843.

Thomas Arnold was born at Cowes in the Isle of Wight in 1795, and educated at Winchester and at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he obtained a

first class in classics in 1814, afterwards being elected to a fellowship at Oriel. The society at Oriel, where Coplestone, Whately, Keble, Newman and others of equal distinction were then resident, had, no doubt, a profound influence upon his manner of thought and conduct. After taking deacon's orders in 1818 he spent some years in the retirement of Laleham, a quiet village situated on an extremely unattractive reach of the Thames, not far from Staines, where he took pupils to prepare them for the University. In 1827 he was appointed Head Master of Rugby School, where his old friend, Dr. Hawkins, afterwards Provost of Oriel, predicted that he would "change the face of education all through the public schools of England." If this prophecy was not carried out to the letter, it must at least be owned that the influence of Arnold's headmastership was widely felt, though most especially by those who came under his personal influence. Up to this time Arnold had done no literary work, though he had projected much; indeed, he never carried out the half of his intentions in this matter, for his life was short and his time much occupied with affairs of greater immediate moment. In his early days at Rugby, his biographer, Dean Stanley, tells us, Arnold had formed a threefold conception of the literary work which lay before him; it was to include a History of Rome, a commentary on the New Testament, and a treatise of some kind upon Christian politics, or the

Appointed Head Master of Rugby, 1827.

Conception of his future literary work.

proper functions and relations of Church and State. The first of these ideas was practically the only one that he ever realized. In 1829 appeared the first volume of his Sermons, the third and last of the original edition being published in 1834, and between the years 1830 and 1835 his edition of "Thucydides," a work of which every true student of Greek literature has felt the value, not so much as a piece of teaching as in the light of a pleasant companion in the study of one of the most fascinating of ancient writers. Thucydides had always been a special favourite with Arnold, who was a thorough scholar in the old sense of the word, at a time when the enthusiasm of scholarship was not limited to small philological questions or the use of ὅταν with the optative.

"Sermons," 1829–1834.

Edition of "Thucydides," 1830–1835.

The "History of Rome" belongs to the literature of the present reign, the first volume having been published in 1838, and the third and last in 1843. After the author's death a supplement was published in 1845, giving the history of the republic from the end of the second Punic war to its final extinction by Augustus, drawn from articles contributed by Arnold to the "Encyclopædia Metropolitana." The Roman history is still regarded as a valuable work, and is sufficiently entertaining to the reader; the account of the earlier period is almost entirely drawn from the work of Niebuhr, whom Arnold regarded with excessive veneration. The rest of Arnold's literary

"History of Rome," 1838–1843.

A posthumous supplement to his History published in 1845.

efforts are chiefly of a polemical character. He was a man of strong opinions, both on political and religious subjects; and he thought it shame to conceal his views upon any subject; nay, rather, he considered it his bounden duty, perhaps overrating the power of his pen, to thrust them upon the public. His views were catholic and liberal. He regarded the Church—not the priesthood, but the whole body—as inseparably linked with the State, for the advantage of the latter; he would have had the Church to be a really universal institution, in which Anglicans and Dissenters were to be induced to live together, even if it required the celebration of different services according to different rituals at different hours on the same day in the same Church; and, above all, he desired to see the principles of Christianity asserted in everyday life, whether private or public. These views he asserted freely and perhaps occasionally with the intolerance of an enthusiast in a number of pamphlets upon Church questions and in newspapers. He even founded, together with his nephew, John Ward, a weekly newspaper of his own, entitled the "Englishman's Register," for the diffusion of their opinions—which lived through a portion of the year 1831. In 1842 he was appointed Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, and in the following year he died, suddenly, at the early age of forty-seven.

His views catholic and liberal.

His views on the Church and the State.

Appointed Regius Professor of Oxford, 1842. Died in 1843.

A contemporary of Arnold, though he outlived him

by many years, who is perhaps more a historian of the Church than of Rome, but who seems to come in not unfitly here, was Henry Hart Milman. Born in 1791 and educated at Eton and Brasenose College, Oxford, of which he became a fellow in 1815, Milman made his first appearance in literature at an early age as a poet. He had, indeed, while an undergraduate, obtained the Newdigate prize for a poem on the Apollo Belvidere, but, nothing daunted by this, he continued to write in verse, and in 1815 gave to the world a tragedy called "Fazio," which was actually produced at Covent Garden with considerable success. Being appointed to a living at Reading, he fell back upon religious poetry, epic and dramatic,—but in no case for the stage,—with such effect that he was chosen to be Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1821, and thus encouraged to persevere, till he closed his poetical career five years later with the tragedy of "Anne Boleyn." The University, with a natural sense of the fitness of things, thereupon made him Bampton Lecturer for the year 1827, and Milman turned his attention to the more sedate study of history, producing in 1829 a "History of the Jews," which made the hair of the University stand on end. This did not, however, arrest the author in the tranquil path of ecclesiastical preferment, as he was appointed in 1835 to a canon's stall at Westminster, together with the Rectory of St. Margaret's. At the beginning of the reign, he was engaged upon what

Henry Hart Milman, 1791–1868.

"Fazio," 1815.

Professor of Poetry at Oxford, 1821.

"Anne Boleyn," 1826.

"History of the Jews," 1829.

is generally regarded as one of the best editions of Gibbon. In 1840 appeared his "History of Christianity from the Birth of Christ to the Abolition of Paganism in the Roman Empire," to which was added, fifteen years later, his greatest work, the "History of Latin Christianity to the Pontificate of Nicholas V." The latter history, especially, shows an amount of learning and research, together with a judicious insight into the best principles of criticism, which were not so common in Milman's time as people are fond of saying they are now. The "Latin Christianity" is still a valued book of reference, and gives its author a more lasting title to fame than many "Martyrs of Antioch" could do, even with the addition of Sir Arthur Sullivan's music. Milman was appointed Dean of St. Paul's in 1849, and retained the appointment to his death in 1868.

"History of Christianity from the Birth of Christ to the Abolition of Paganism in the Roman Empire," 1840.

"History of Latin Christianity, including that of the Popes to the Pontificate of Nicholas V." 1854-1855.

Dean of St. Paul's, 1849.

Died in 1868.

A somewhat incongruous figure to appear in this company has nevertheless a right to be mentioned in connection with Roman history. Sir George Cornewall Lewis (1806–1863), another product of the healthy combination of Eton and Oxford, was best known as a politician, and held various important ministerial offices, including those of Home Secretary and Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was also a prolific writer, chiefly upon more or less political questions, among his most successful treatises being the "Remarks on the Use and Abuse of Political Terms," and the "Essay on the Government of Dependencies," the latter

Sir George Cornewall Lewis, 1806-1863.

"Remarks on the Use and Abuse of Political Terms," 1832.

"Essay on the Government of Dependencies," 1849.

of which has been recently reprinted. This class of writing is seldom entertaining, and in Sir George Lewis's hands becomes exceedingly dry; but there is more life in the more important work which leads us to class the author among the students of ancient history, a ruthless attack upon all manner of legends and traditions, entitled an "Inquiry into the Credibility of the Early Roman History." We have small sympathy, as a rule, with the demolishers of traditions. It is certainly not a work of mercy, and seldom of necessity; indeed, it usually reminds us, especially when carried out with undue violence, of the unnecessary efforts of Panard's stage hero:

"Inquiry into the Credibility of the Early Roman History," 1855.

A ruthless attack on the early Roman Legends.

> "J'ai vu Roland dans sa colère
> Exercer l'effort de son bras
> Pour pouvoir arracher de terre
> Des arbres—qui n'y tenait pas."

But there is certainly in this author a refreshing vivacity of attack, hitting out all round, not only at the good, easy legends by which children are lured on to think there must really be something to read in history, but with equal force assailing the calm assumptions of the scientific Niebuhr,—which gives a somewhat pleasurable sensation to the reader. Besides other literary work, Sir George Lewis became, on the death of Professor Empson, the editor of the "Edinburgh Review" for about a year, being succeeded on his retirement by the present editor, Mr. Henry Reeve.

Edited the "Edinburgh Review," 1854–55.

About the same period in the early part of the reign were produced two of the most successful and valuable works on the history of ancient Greece which have yet been given to the world. Strikingly different in life, manners and writing as the two historians were, they are brought together by their common study, and after the work of their life was done, they sleep, side by side, in Westminster Abbey. Adhering to the chronological order of their works rather than to the age of the writers, we must take the youngest first. Connop Thirlwall was born in 1797, the son of an English clergyman, and educated at Charterhouse and Trinity College, Cambridge. In early life he had shown some literary ability, and his father had taken the perhaps unnecessary trouble of collecting a number of his productions in prose and verse, which were published in 1807 under the title of "Primitiæ." Thirlwall had originally chosen the bar as a profession, but afterwards entered the Church, and was soon appointed to a valuable living in Yorkshire. Like other young men of his time, he fell under the influence of the new criticism which was then startling the world by its daring system of replacing doubtful tradition by clever guesses at the possible truth resting upon a still less solid foundation; and in collaboration with Julius Hare he commenced a translation of Niebuhr's "History of Rome," in 1828. It was not till a few years later that he set to work upon his "History of Greece," which was in

Connop Thirlwall, 1797–1875.

"History of Greece."

its original form a contribution to Dionysius Lardner's "Cabinet Cyclopædia" (1835–47), but was afterwards published separately in an enlarged form (1845–52). It is a work full of interest and much more readable than the more elaborate history of Grote, though the latter has to a great extent supplanted it as a work of reference. Thirlwall's history will, however, always retain its value, and certainly deserves more attention than is generally paid to it. In 1840 Thirlwall was appointed Bishop of St. David's, an office for which he proved himself to be admirably suited. From this time to his retirement, thirty-four years later, his work was confined to the administration of his diocese. He was, however, a member of the committee appointed to revise the translation of the Old Testament. After his death in 1875, a new side of his character was revealed to the public in the charming series of "Letters to a Friend," published in 1880.

Appointed Bishop of St. David's 1840.

"Letters to a Friend," published after his death.

A singular contrast to the kindly Bishop of St. David's was the hard-headed German banker-philosopher, George Grote. Born in 1794, and consequently three years older than Thirlwall, he also was educated at the Charterhouse; but three years makes a serious difference with boys, and the future historians of Greece do not seem to have come much in contact, though they were great friends in later life. At sixteen he was established in the banking house set up by his grandfather, Andreas Grote, the first member of the

George Grote, 1794–1871.

family who settled in England, of which he became the head on his father's death in 1830. In early life this very serious young man fell under the dominion of James Mill, and established a little philosophical society of kindred spirits, who met at his bank to discuss abstruse subjects at the gruesome hour of half-past eight in the morning, before business. In 1821 appeared his first publication, a "Statement of the Question of Parliamentary Reform," to which succeeded other forgotten pamphlets and some unimportant journalism. Grote sat in Parliament as member for the City of London from 1832 to 1841, and held a leading position among the section of philosophical Radicals. His retirement in 1841, when his chances of re-election were extremely doubtful, is generally attributed to a desire to continue his work on the "History of Greece," which had been commenced several years before. The first volumes, however, were not published till 1846, and the publication of the work extended over a period of ten years, the last volume appearing in 1856. Grote's "History of Greece" is undoubtedly a work of considerable value, though lacking the literary merit which we find in that of Thirlwall. It is an extraordinarily elaborate work, which contains perhaps all that can be said—or could be said then—on its subject, and enters at great length upon many matters, apparently of detail, which less careful historians are apt to slur over. Though we cannot say that it contains

Influenced in early life by Jas. Mill.

"Statement of the Question of Parliamentary Reform," 1821.

"History of Greece," 1846–1856.

Its detailed and elaborate character.

nothing but information, there can certainly be little complaint as to anything being left out, and to the student, whose interest in history is limited to facts, there is much to be learned from Grote. It may be said that he occasionally is too exact in following the ancient historians; his account of the Athenian expedition against Syracuse and the earlier years of the Peloponnesian war generally, being little more than a translation from Thucydides, including even the imaginary speeches put by that great historian into the mouths of the various statesmen and ambassadors of his period. As a literary work, the prolix and tedious history can hardly be said to have any merit. In later life, Grote devoted himself more to the study of Greek philosophy, his principal works in this line being his "Plato and other Companions of Socrates," published in 1865, and his "Aristotle," which was not completed at his death in 1871. He also published in 1868 a "Review of John Stuart Mill's Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," originally contributed to the "Westminster Review." A biography entitled the "Personal Life of George Grote" was published in 1873 by his widow, Mrs. Harriet Grote (1792–1878), who was already known in the ranks of literature by her "Memoir of the Life of Ary Scheffer" (1860), and other works.

A "Review of John Stuart Mill's Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," 1868.

"Personal Life of George Grote," 1873.

Mrs. Harriet Grote, 1792–1878.

"Memoir of Ary Scheffer," 1860.

Biographers

It is always a somewhat difficult task to apportion biographers their exact place in literature. So much

depends, not only on the skill of the writer and his interest in his work, but also on the subjects that he selects, that the ordinary rules of literary criticism do not always apply. Much, too, seems to depend on the relation of the writer to his subject. Out of the three works which we should consider unapproachably the greatest biographies ever written, Tacitus's Agricola, Boswell's Johnson, and Lockhart's Scott, two were written by the sons-in-law of great men whom they regarded with a really filial devotion. Boswell, on the other hand, had no relation of kinship with the subject of his memoir, but the enthusiasm of the disciple—and of a disciple whose ardour was little restrained by the ordinary bounds of discretion—here supplied all that could be implied in the closest family ties. Something of the same relation of master and disciple marks a biography published in the early years of this reign to which has been ascribed since its first appearance a measure of praise which we own to thinking somewhat excessive. Arnold and Stanley had, indeed, been literally master and pupil in the latter's school-days, but there is something more than this partly accidental tie in the disciple's feeling of which we have spoken. But before dealing with the biography, it is necessary we should say something of the biographer. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, son of the Reverend Edward Stanley, afterwards Bishop of Norwich, was born in 1815 and educated at Rugby under Arnold,

and their exact place in literature.

Master and pupil.

Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, 1815–1881.

and at Balliol, where he distinguished himself greatly, taking almost all the prizes it was possible for him to get. His attachment to his old schoolmaster, of whom he also had personal knowledge as a friend of his father's, seems never to have been interrupted from the early Rugby days, in which he had learned to look up to him with something more than the reverence of a favourite pupil. At the time of Arnold's terribly sudden death, Stanley was staying in his house, and had the painful task of conveying the news to such of his children as were not present. He was at once, in spite of his youth, regarded as the proper person to be charged with the duty of recording Arnold's life, and old friends of the latter holding the highest positions in the kingdom were pleased to join in helping this brilliant young man with all the materials at their disposal. The result was the

"Life of Arnold," 1844.

"Life of Arnold," published in two volumes in 1844, and at once received with a chorus of approval, due perhaps chiefly to its subject, but which has hardly diminished in the course of time even now, when both Arnold and Stanley have become men of the past. It is certainly a work of loyal affection, written with the sole object of setting before the world the greatness and goodness of his master, the author modestly effacing himself entirely from the record. To us it certainly bears an appearance of diffuseness and verbosity resulting in part from the extremely minute analysis of Arnold's conduct and

A work of loyal affection.

motives in every branch of life, which we are inclined to think, at the present time at least, somewhat superfluous. The arrangement, too, is faulty, the separation of the text of the biography from the very numerous letters published along with it, contributing to deprive the former of its energy and the latter of its interest. The popularity of the work, however, as we have said, has in no way decreased. Stanley was also a fertile writer on other subjects, his "History of the Jewish Church" being perhaps his most celebrated work, while his "Sinai and Palestine" (1853), is still considered as one of the most valuable contributions to a subject which never stands still. It was perhaps, however, principally by his personal gifts that Stanley attained his high position in the Church and in the world generally. He was appointed a Canon of Canterbury in 1850, and Dean of Westminster in 1863, retaining that office up to his death in 1881. He was also Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford, and was twice selected preacher to that University.

"History of the Jewish Church."

"Sinai and Palestine," 1853.

Canon of Canterbury, 1850.

Dean of Westminster 1863.

Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford.

Some valuable collections of biographies have also to be recorded. Few more important contributions to this department of history can be found than Campbell's Chancellors and Hook's Archbishops of Canterbury. The elder of these writers, John Campbell, the son of a minister at Cupar-Fife, and of course a descendant of the house of Argyll, was born in 1779, and educated at the University of

Lord Campbell, 1779–1861.

St. Andrews. He was at first intended for the Church, but afterwards chose the bar as a profession, in which he rose to great eminence, being appointed Q. C. in 1827, Solicitor-General in 1832, Attorney-General in 1834, Lord Chancellor of Ireland in 1841, Lord Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench in 1850, and finally Lord Chancellor of England in 1857. He had also held other non-legal posts in the administration, and sat in the House of Commons from 1831 till he was raised to the Peerage in 1841, by the title of Lord Campbell. It was about this time, when he had gone out of office with Lord Melbourne's Ministry, that he found time to devote himself to literature. He had already written books on legal and political questions, but his mind was now bent on a more purely literary success. He thought for a while of a "History of the Long Parliament," then of a series of lives of the Irish Chancellors, which he gave up as not likely to prove interesting. The first volume of his "Lives of the Lord Chancellors and Keepers of the Great Seal of England" was published in 1845, the third in 1847, a supplementary volume, containing the lives of his contemporaries, Lords Lyndhurst and Brougham, after his death in 1869. These biographies are carelessly written in an extremely slovenly style, and are in many cases inaccurate and unjust; but they never fail to keep up their interest, and especially in the latest volumes, where Campbell is writing of his own time, are full

Lord Chancellor of Ireland, 1841.

Lord Chancellor of England, 1857.

Raised to the Peerage, 1841.

"Lives of the Lord Chancellors," 1845–1847.

Supplementary volume, 1869.

of vivacity,—of prejudice, too, it is said, perhaps more than the previous ones,—but one can safely say of all Campbell's biographical work, that the unpardonable sin of dulness is not included in the list of his transgressions. To the "Chancellors" succeeded the "Lives of the Lord Chief Justices" (1849–57), to which may be generally applied what we have said of the earlier work. It does not come within our province to speak of Lord Campbell's eminence as a lawyer. He died in 1861.

"Lives of the Lord Chief Justices," 1849–1857.

Died in 1861.

The biographer of the Archbishops of Canterbury moved in a very different sphere. Walter Farquhar Hook, son of James Hook, Dean of Worcester, known chiefly for his musical talents, and nephew of Theodore Hook, was born in 1798, and educated at Winchester and Christ Church. In 1821 he was ordained and became curate to his father, then rector of Whippingham in the Isle of Wight, and after various changes was promoted in 1837 to the important post of Vicar of Leeds, which he continued to hold for more than twenty years. His ecclesiastical opinions originally inclined towards the strong High Church party, who were paramount at Oxford in the commencement of the reign, and his great sermon, "Hear the Church," preached before Her Majesty in the Chapel Royal in 1838, was considered one of the most effective utterances on that side. Hook, however, was not inclined to go so far as the other leaders of the Oxford movement, and

Walter Farquhar Hook.

"Hear the Church," 1838.

his views became much modified in course of time. In 1859 he was appointed Dean of Chichester, which post he retained till his death in 1875, steadily refusing the offers of promotion which were continually pressed upon him. It was at Chichester that he achieved his great literary work, the "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury," of which the first volume appeared in 1861, and the eleventh and last just after his death in 1875. He was not able, however, to carry on the series beyond Archbishop Juxon, whose episcopate closed a few years after the Restoration. Hook's "Lives" are undoubtedly of considerable historical value, and show much care and research, but it cannot be denied that they are occasionally one-sided and too frequently heavy. Hook was also the author of many works on ecclesiastical and other subjects, of which the best known is probably his "Church Dictionary," published in 1842.

"Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury," 1861.

"Church Dictionary."

The record of authors who devoted themselves to biography on a large scale can hardly be closed without a reference to a most diligent worker who is still living and at work. Samuel Smiles, in his early days a man of various professions, as surgeon, journalist, and secretary to various railway companies, has during a long and useful career produced a great number of works, chiefly designed to point out the manner in which men of talents have struggled on, in spite of difficulties, to a position for which their origin and education did not seem to

Samuel Smiles, 1816.

qualify them. Among his best known works are the "Life of George Stephenson" (1857), "Self-Help; with illustrations of Character and Conduct" (1859), the "Lives of Engineers, with an Account of their Works" (1861), and the "Scottish Naturalist," one of the best of the series. Mr. Smiles has also contributed largely to the "Quarterly Review" and other periodical literature.

"Life of George Stephenson."
"Self-Help."
"Lives of Engineers."
"Robert Dick, the Scottish Naturalist."

CHAPTER V.

OF THE GREATER VICTORIAN POETS.

The prospect at the dawn of the Victorian Era.

We had little reason to expect that the reign of Queen Victoria should have been distinguished as an age of the highest poetry. The preceding fifty years had given birth to the noblest school of poets since Queen Elizabeth's "spacious times," and it would have been natural to look for a period of *relâche*,—a dying out of the great fires and paling and cooling of nature, after an effort so immense as that which produced a band so great and so different as Wordsworth and Coleridge on one hand, and Byron and Shelley on another. But happily for the wealth and honour of our age, this was not so; and Wordsworth had not ceased to write, when there arose from the very bosom of the young generation the new music and individual voice of Alfred Tennyson—this time

Alfred Tennyson, 1809–92.

no voice of the mountains, no defiant challenge of society, no weird strain out of the unseen—but the most English of poetry, with the inspiration in it of the plains and low-lying levels, the rich and quiet fields, the midland country, with Locksley Hall lying in the wide landscape of its meadows, and the problems of actual life and thought replacing all tumults and commotions of a revolutionary age. The new poet, born in 1809, was the son of a Lincolnshire clergyman of good family and connection, coming out of the very heart of long-established and tranquil living, the parsonage and the hall, and trained among his peers at Cambridge, uneccentric, breaking no bonds of life. His first production of all was a prize poem on the very unattractive subject of "Timbuctoo"—of which, as of other prize poems, the world knows little. In 1830, as he touched the first edge of manhood, he brought out a modest volume in concert with a brother. Two brothers of Lord Tennyson indeed have shown poetical power, and contributed some poems to literature, which, but for the overpowering fame of the chief singer of the name, would have received more recognition. But it is natural that in the extreme light of his pre-eminence their individual work should have been thrown into the background. Another volume of poems followed in 1832, and two volumes in 1842, when his reputation may be said to have been established, though amid many criticisms and protestations.

"Timbuctoo."

"Poems by Two Brothers."

"School-Miss Alfred," with his "blue fly singing in the pane," made much sport for a certain class of writers, and the poems addressed to "Airy Fairy Lilian" and other beauties of her kind, though already distinguished by much beautiful versification, afforded naturally to the adversary much occasion to blaspheme. To write "Who would not be a Merman bold?" was to tempt the contemporary critic beyond all power of self-restraint. The wonderful picture, however, of Locksley Hall and its story, so skilfully told with an entirely new power of suggestive narrative, took possession at once of the public mind and imagination, a result which the extraordinarily clever parody produced by Professor Aytoun and Sir Theodore Martin in the Bon Gaultier Ballads rather contributed to, than lessened, while such poems as "The Two Voices," "The Lotus-Eaters," etc., seized the attention of the higher critic, and the "Queen of the May" charmed the multitude less capable of high comprehension.

"Airy Fairy Lilian."

"Locksley Hall."

Parody in the Bon Gaultier Ballads.

"The Lotus-Eaters" and the "Queen of the May."

These early volumes were chiefly composed of the shorter poems which, in almost all cases, form a poet's chief charter and title to universal fame, but Mr. Tennyson's reputation was so completely established by the time his "Princess" appeared in 1847, that there was no house in the country interested in poetry or the highest literature where this new work was not eagerly received and discussed as one of the chief topics of the day. Such a warmth of contem-

"Princess," 1847.

porary interest does not always secure the final verdict of fame, but it always shows the immediate grasp which a writer has attained of the mind of his time. The fantastic theme of this beautiful poem was rather calculated to dismay than to increase the interest of the public, nor was there anything novel in the treatment of the "woman question" suggested in it; but it was full of poetry, and the snatches of exquisite song which broke into the narrative here and there, were like the little melodies in a piece of scientific music, grateful and delightful to the common ear. It can scarcely be said, however, that this poem added much to the writer's fame, and it was not perhaps till the publication of "In Memoriam," in 1850, that Mr. Tennyson assumed the supreme position which he has always fully maintained: although it was in the beginning of the same year, but before that publication, that he received the post of Laureate, with a sort of universal consent of Society, nobody venturing to suggest a more worthy bearer of the wreath. Criticism has died away into an almost sacred respect for this unique poem; but naturally this was not the case when it first appeared, when it was very sharply, not to say contemptuously, hacked to pieces by the haste of contemporary opinion, the occasionally harsh verses which occur here and there in a strain of almost unexampled melody, and into which the philosophy of his theme led him, held up to public remark, as

Full of snatches of exquisite song.

"In Memoriam," 1850.

Receives the post of Laureate.

A strain of almost unexampled melody.

well as that philosophy itself which was assailed by all the darts of both orthodox and sceptical opposition. These outcries, however, which are sure to attend the production of every work of importance, were soon hushed in the universal adoption of this wonderful poem into the very heart of hearts of the English-speaking world. It was said to be a profanation of grief laying it bare to the public eye —as it was said also that the author's claim to represent the anguish of loss when what he had lost was "only a friend" was a presumptuous assumption of experience which belonged to more poignant and intimate bereavement. The fact remains that no such representation of the mind of grief was ever written. It is not an elegy like Lycidas; it is not a song of consolation, such as those in which many inferior voices have attempted to persuade the mourner that he ought to rejoice instead of grieving. It is sorrow itself which takes the word, embodying as no poet has ever done before, the long discursive wanderings of melancholy thought, the mingled train of recollections—sudden pictures of the past disclosing themselves through those tears which are never long absent from the musing eyes, sudden arrows of a remembered word passing swift through the heart, and all returning and returning like the flight of a bird, however long he may have been on the wing, to the one point, the central fact of the universe to the mourner—the certainty that "he whom thou lovest

Not an elegy nor song of consolation.

Unparalleled beauty of its conception.

is dead." It is not in the first anguish of such a catastrophe that one would put "In Memoriam" into the sufferer's hands, but a little later, when he has begun to feel how, amid all the enforcements of external life, and all the efforts of returning vitality, his thoughts return with a persistent force which is beyond his control to the vacant place which makes the whole world empty of attraction; and that not only through the great questions which arise from this void, and the mysteries that surround it, but by a hundred trivial things which are all pervaded by that thread, and bring him back and back to the one unchanging fact which is the centre of all. This is the secret of the power of a poem which is to many a sacred thing like nothing else in the world. The form as well as the inspiration is perfect for this hallowed purpose. "The swallow flights of song that dip their wings in tears," carrying the mind with them again into many a flight of its own, the constant return, dropping from pensive skies of twilight, or the blaze of the remembered sunshine that can shine no more, to that green spot where the beloved is not; and the realization of life which is no longer a joyful interdependence as when two walked together in the golden fields, but now a lonely path among the thorns. The poet gathers up mournfully all those links of association by which every trivial moment and movement are connected with the departed time, and notes every unseen and silent variation of

The secret of its power.

Its form and inspiration perfect.

the mind which, like the song of the linnet, "now is gay" because her little ones are safe, and

> "Now is sad, her note is changed
> Because her brood is stolen away;"

or, like the blind man in his chair, beating out the measure of time with the absorption of the unseeing,

> "Whose inner light can never die,
> Whose night of loss is ever there."

Arthur Hallam.

The young man whose death made his friend capable of this strange insight into all the ways of sorrow, Arthur Hallam, was himself little more than a hope unfulfilled. His pathetic little "Remains" do not even seem to convey to the reader the promises which all his youthful circle saw in him:—a conclusion not by any means unusual—yet in inspiring and making possible this great poem he has had an unusual fate.

"Ode for the funeral of the Duke of Wellington."

His first tribute as Laureate.

The "Ode for the Funeral of the Duke of Wellington," which was published impressively on the morning of one of the most imposing public ceremonies of the age, the burial of that great chief by his country with mournful congress of all classes, was Mr. Tennyson's first tribute in his office of Laureate. It is perhaps the finest of the odes on public events which have from time to time stirred the heart of the nation, rolling forth its muffled drums, sounding its great peal of lamentation in a strain that is worthy

The grandeur of its verse.

of an empire's mourning. The grandeur yet self-restraint of the great verse, like its subject, the dramatic yet solemn question, "Who is he that cometh?" the impressive beauty of the answer,

> "Mighty seaman, this is he
> Was great by land as thou by sea,"

and the repeated proclamation of noble duty as higher than glory, embody all that fame would say. And arises the assurance,

> "Whatever record come to light,
> He never shall be shamed,"

then and the burst of

> "Honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
> Eternal honour to his name!"

The sound of the mourning of a mighty nation was never more nobly set forth.

"Charge of the Light Brigade."

This great poem is, however, perhaps less universally popular than the "Charge of the Light Brigade," which soon after gave to one of the most tragic incidents of the Crimean War a poetical immortality such as seldom arises on the immediate stroke of any great feat of arms. The minstrel strain is changed; it has not the amplification or the detail of classic times; but still it strikes like a trumpet note across the calm levels of life, and gives to valour its meed as in Homeric days. One curious nineteenth-century difference (if we may yield so

much to fashion as to ascribe to abstract motive what was demanded by the character of the court) is, that it is no chief or leader, but the nameless, heroic common duty which took no time to inquire whether "some one had blundered," which is here celebrated before earth and heaven. From Homer to Scott it had been the man who was the theme; here it was the *men*, the nameless workers out of a rash meaning not their own.

Its theme.

The next production of Tennyson's genius was also pervaded by the spirit of the war time; the idea suddenly revealed to an age which had sunk into the apathy of physical well-being, of certain high advantages to the common weal, of the possible dissipation of the ties of peace—a strange thought for the first half of the nineteenth century, which had plumed itself on a wisdom superior to its predecessors and believed itself to have beaten the old swords into pruning hooks, and attained a happiness and perfection unexampled in earlier ages. It was the purpose of "Maud" to show with what dull deteriorations and smug mediocrity this complacent peace had been accompanied, and how wholesome was the blast of tempest which blew so many cobwebs away, and roused the old manful spirit in the race. This, however, was perhaps too artificial an aim for poetry, and it was the exquisite construction of the little drama, the wonderful picture it gave of a young man's love, and the still more exquisite songs with

"Maud," 1855.

Purpose and exquisite construction of the poem.

which it was threaded through, which secured its instant acceptance by all readers. The intoxication of that climax of youthful feeling, the visionary adoration, "There is none like her, none," the paths that grow rosy under her feet, the *vita nuova* which uplifts both above the earth, floating them upward into a paradise of imagination and feeling, has never been more exquisitely expressed. It is less inpassioned than Romeo with Juliet, less dreamy than Dante with Beatrice, yet we may venture to place it in its lesser perfection beside these two in kind if not in degree—which is the greatest thing that can be said for any poem. There are drawbacks in the long soliloquies of the hero's madness and his commentaries on contemporary subjects, which sometimes jar upon the ear, but the heart and centre of the poem, the love-tale, is above all words of praise. It is delicate and perfect in art, as was the prose romance of "Esmond," which had appeared a few years before, though there is of course no other analogy between these two works.

"Idyls of the King."

Three years later, Mr. Tennyson began the publication of his "Idyls of the King." He had already indeed given a foretaste of that section of his work in the "Morte d'Arthur," published in one of his early volumes. The first series of these contained the lovely romance of "Elaine," the protracted but beautiful story of "Enid and Geraint," and the one marked and notable study of evil (very modern and nineteenth

"Elaine."

"Enid and Geraint."

century corruption in the midst of the heroic age of romance) which is the theme in "Vivien"—besides the central thread of the great tale, the wonderful poetic conception of Lancelot and that "faith unfaithful" which made him "falsely true," the great figures of the blameless king and the majestic Guinevere. This first volume was the most powerful and has remained the most popular of the series. Amid the wonderful group around whom and whose story all other interests centre, and whose sway and influence are the inspiration of the whole, Lancelot stands forth as the one distinct creation which our poet's noble genius has given to the world. The blameless king is not sufficiently individualised to count in this way. Perfection of character has always indeed this drawback, that is difficult to identify and fix it upon the human imagination. The conception of Guinevere can scarcely be said to be original at all. She is a woman of grand proportions, but no individual distinction. The sweet Elaine is a vision of youth and love, and the visionary impatience of despair. Enid is a womanly shadow of the too-much patience of the mediæval ideal, like Griselda. Lancelot alone has added a living and most notable being to the world, the very perfect gentle knight of Chaucer, with the tragic soul in him of a guilt which is against all his perfection, yet part of it, contrary to every tradition of his nature, yet its chief motive and feature to add at once the com-

"Vivien."

"Lancelot."

"Guinevere."

"Enid."

plication which the modern mind demands, and a deep and terrible principle of humanity to the ideal. The noble spirit overborne by this shadow, never able to escape from it, his honour rooted in dishonour, is one of the most wonderful attempts of poetry to realize the highest imagination. It is not so lofty nor so elevated as Hamlet, whose great soul has no such clog; and yet the romance and tragedy of that burden attracts many minds even more. The character of Lancelot and the poems that are devoted to him, or in which he appears, mark the highest point of Lord Tennyson's poetry, whose genius, however, must be allowed to be not dramatic in any Shakespearian sense. There is, however, something almost as masterly and fine in the remarkable power of construction which links these poems together, showing how Arthur's throne was established and flourished in purity, and how the unnoted evil crept in, till by degrees all was resolved again into the elements, which belong to the highest region of poetic art.

Marks the highest point of Lord Tennyson's poetry.

> "The little rift within the lute
> Which by-and-bye will make the music mute. . ."

is revealed to us with consummate skill; and all the lesser histories which the reader found so much less attractive than the first, are by degrees perceived to be so by the intention and self-denial of the artist, whose purpose was not to enchant the world with ever a new tale more perfect than the last, but to show how

the pure atmosphere of the ideal kingdom was disturbed, its unity broken, and the noble meaning stolen away. As this disintegration goes on we are slowly brought to see how the chivalrous rule of redressing wrong and protecting the weak was no longer enough for the self-convicted warriors, whose wild quest of the Holy Grail was but the climax of their previous wanderings, though this time it was a desperate desire to save themselves from moral destruction by a miraculous agency, and not the divergence of individual passion and sin, which led them away. The final destruction of Arthur's kingdom which followed upon that last effort after something better than possible life (yet was full of noble individual traits, such as the honest devotion of the good Sir Bors, whose object was to save Lancelot rather than to gain privilege for himself), is a truth perhaps too subtle for the ordinary reader, especially for one who takes the Idyls individually instead of as a whole, but it is the very soul of the great design. The dates of the publications of this great series were: "Idyls of the King," 1858; "Holy Grail," 1869; "Gareth and Lynette," 1872. Interposed between came the poems of "Enoch Arden," and "Aylmer's Field," 1864. "The Lover's Tale," a work of youth, 1879; and finally, in 1886, "Locksley Hall," sixty years after, which gives us the matured and harmonious thoughts of age upon the theme of youth, and is full of a chastened beauty; and the brief collection of poems called "Demeter," in

"The Holy Grail."

Dates of the great series.

"Enoch Arden."
"Aylmer's Field."
"Locksley Hall."

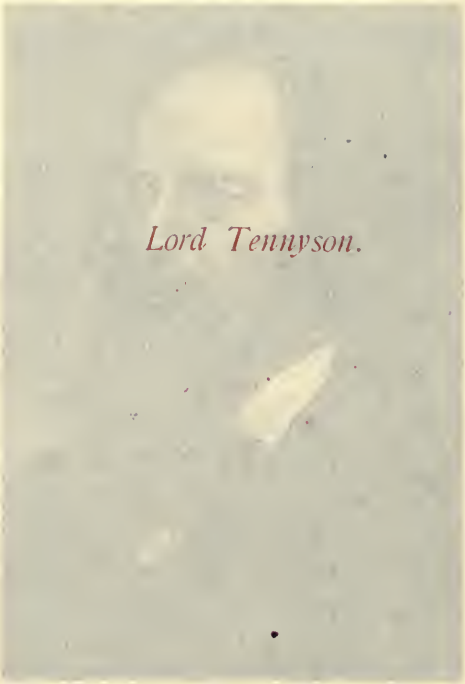
"Demeter."

1890, which would seem to have included the parting song of the poet, were it not that as we write still later productions are being given to the world. The last touch of autobiography, so to speak, the last lyric of personal feeling which we have had from our poet's hand, has not, however, been superseded, and is so exquisite as to form a fitting close to his long career of stainless work and life.

Lord Tennyson died Oct. 6, 1892.

Tennyson and Browning contrasted.

It has been the privilege of our age to have two contemporary poets both of the highest class, extremely different in everything but greatness, as it has also been its privilege to possess two novelists of unusual powers, whose names must always be linked together in every record of the Victorian age. Tennyson and Browning are the twin names which rise to every lip together, though it would be difficult to think of any two men whose genius was more unlike. The verse of Lord Tennyson is always a clear flowing stream, pellucid and full of melody, rising into sonorous grandeur, falling into the most harmonious cadences, music learned, and suave, and noble, the utterances at once of a scholar and of one of the sweetest voices of nature. Sweetness is nowhere characteristic of Browning's rugged and much interrupted, yet vigorous and often splendid strain. He does not concern himself with its effect upon the ear, but pours forth his great verse with a freedom from all bondage, either of the rules of poetry or the instinctive preference of nature for melodious utter-



Lord Tennyson.

ance, which has the first effect of discouraging or even disgusting ears accustomed to the classic cadences of earlier poetry. That the reader soon becomes accustomed to that halting and broken measure, and that its strange power of expressing the equally broken and irregular course of human thought and passion is wonderful, exceeding with a sort of Gothic force and richness, the serener chastened beauty of classic inspiration, is equally true; but there will always remain some who are unable to surmount the first impression, and to whom Robert Browning will always remain the veiled philosopher of Sordello rather than the poet of Men and Women, the Seer whose divination penetrates the delicate heart of the child martyr Pompilia, as well as of the saintly old Pope and the mediæval ruffian—the man who has revealed to us so many corners of the human heart, and followed so many lines of subtle thought to their fountain-head. The profound and tender reflections of *In Memoriam*, those soundings of the depths of sorrow and all its wandering thoughts, have no place in Mr. Browning's poetry. It is his, not to console us by the company of his own brother soul, wistfully interrogating the problems which are to him as to us the first questions in life as they are its last mysteries, but to descend with his keen lantern into the being of another and another fellow-creature, revealing how the subtle currents flow, how the strange inspirations rise, how men work out their astonishing story each for him-

self in a wonderful darkling world of impulse and motive, undiscovered by any shining of the sun. To Tennyson the romantic, the mystic, the stories of love and death, the thoughts that search for the lost through earth and heaven, the ideal in all its grace, the empire of imagination over all the world; but to Browning the caverns and subterraneous halls of an inner universe, the exploration of those rivulets of secret meaning which water the earth, the mind within, which gives to all outward action its significance and force. The French critics in their day made their world ring with the distinction between the romantic and classic schools of art, a tiresome controversy, chiefly about words. But the distinction between our two great poets is more curious, more interesting than any such artificial classification. The one within, the other without, they have worked together as few brothers in arms have ever done, at the exposition of mankind to man, the first science in the world, the most curious, the most majestic, to which no science of the generation of fishes, no theory of rocks and stones, no reconstruction of skeletons or sifting of cosmic dust and rubbish can ever be compared.

The distinction between the two great poets.

Robert Browning, 1812–1889.

Robert Browning was born in 1812, a few years younger than Lord Tennyson and than his own poet-wife, and was brought up in a *milieu* and with associations very different from those of the rural gentry and University-bred companions among

whom Lord Tennyson's early days were passed. If it mattered what these antecedents were, he was of the class which the French call the *haute bourgeoisie*, a title which has no synonym in English, unless it were the vague term "middle class," which has much varied in meaning since the beginning of the century. It then included professional men of all classes, and the greater part of a more or less educated public, not absolutely included in the "nobility and gentry" of more formal nomenclature. Now it is not supposed to ascend above the higher kind of shopkeepers, a limit which no doubt includes many well-educated and altogether worthy persons; but to this class Mr. Browning certainly did not belong. His first poem, "Pauline," was published before he had completed his twenty-first year, in 1833; his second, "Paracelsus," in 1835; "Sordello" followed in 1840. An intelligent critic in "Tait's Magazine," then an important organ of literary opinion, spoke of the first as "a piece of pure bewilderment," which is indeed the verdict which the world in general has passed upon all those early poems, with a faint reserve perhaps in favour of "Paracelsus." We need not enter into any criticism of those works. It has been, we think, the mistaken aim of the special worshippers of the poet to force interpretations and explanations, especially of "Sordello," upon the world. It does not seem the least likely that these will ever be successful. There will no doubt always remain

"Pauline," 1833.

"Paracelsus," 1835.
"Sordello," 1840.

some who, like Coleridge's wedding guest, are chosen from the beginning of time to understand and appreciate, and to those we may safely leave them.

After that discouraging preface, Browning became really but slowly known to the world in the series of works at first entitled "Bells and Pomegranates," which began with the little lyrical drama of "Pippa Passes,' and included a great many of his finest works. When the public began to understand what he meant, which indeed was not for a long time, it turned its ear very completely to the poet, although it still doubted its own comprehension of him, years after comprehension had been altogether within its reach. There were always enthusiastic admirers at all times, and his name had weight, and a sort of alarmed respect attached to it long before the tardy applauses came. The "Bells and Pomegranates," in which many very fine poems were printed, appeared at intervals from 1841 to 1846, but it was not till 1855, when "Men and Women" was published, that the balance actually turned. These wonderful poems might still afford a roughness here and there, a measure broken by the very wealth of metaphor and thought, in which the poet's mind luxuriated, but they could not longer be kept back, even by a thousand parentheses and digressions, from the common intelligence, which by this time also had been trained to receive them. From that period at least, if not before, the name of Browning assumed

"Bells and Pomegranates."

"Pippa Passes."

"Men and Women."

its place by the side of Tennyson, and the question which of the two was greater, was one not always given on the side of the more quickly acknowledged and better known poet.

The age in which his poems would have been felt and understood.

It is only perhaps in an age which affords a certain balance to the abstract force of science which is its chief preoccupation, by a keen interest in human character, the age of the biographer and personal historian, that these poems would have been fully felt and understood. It is some compensation for the predominance of the physical which evolution would fain make all in all, that the development of human character, a thing so unaccountable and so little capable of being measured and classified (notwithstanding the fashionable and feeble creed of heredity which is so fallacious and inconclusive), should be the object of so much eager curiosity and thought. Browning's power of entering into the mind of his subject of the moment, of disclosing the unexpected turn of thought, the twists of moral sentiment, the wonderful way in which each man accounts for and justifies—even while sometimes accusing—himself, is almost unique in poetic conception. There is much noble poetical description—in which chiefly the art of Lord Tennyson consists—and there is the dramatic power of representing human creatures in action, which both these poets possess in some degree; but the separate gift of working out character, passion, and life in the inner

His peculiar gift.

operations of the mind itself, is the peculiar possession of Browning—showing the very spring and motive of human existence, the secret wheels which regulate the motion of humanity. The mournful self-revelation of the painter Andrea, so full of the sentiment of better things, so unable to overcome the conscious weakness of nature; the deadly calm of intellectual life moving blindly, yet with a melancholy dignity, against the dark curtains of mystery

"Cleon."

which close in the world around them in "Cleon," and sharpened with the keen touch of dawning science

"Karshish."

in "Karshish;" the sensuous enjoyment of life, yet sense of beauty and natural truth which light up the levity of the careless reveller, in the mediæval monk Lippo; are, each in itself, perfect realisations of individual consciousness and meaning, the philosopher not less true than the musing poet, or the rosy friar. Down even to the ecclesiastical man of the world in Bishop Blougram, and the still profounder depths of the shrewd and vulgarly subtle medium Sludge, the poet-philosopher goes with his lantern,

Browning's power of realisation.

lighting up the strange world that is beneath. They all account for themselves, fit themselves into their wonderful theories of the world, justify their being with an art that is unquestionable, which fulfils one of the highest requirements of life, by permitting, nay, forcing us, to put ourselves in the place of each. That large understanding of men which in its supreme degree is the root of the compassion

and loving-kindness of God, thus in a finite measure, yet partaking of the infinite as only genius and love can do, opens up for us the secret heart and kernel of the world.

In a still higher degree this power was manifested in the extraordinary pictures of *The Ring and the Book*. There a group of persons perform before us a great drama in which the principal forces of good and evil, love and hatred are set forth in the most novel and powerful way. It is not such a drama as could be placed on any stage, the familiar skill of the actor embodying for us in broad lines some open secret of story, some certain combination of limited events—showing how a middle-aged husband, jealous of his child-wife, goaded her innocent soul with tyrannies and perversities until she fled from him under the care of a chivalrous priest, a young man with motives so easy to misconstrue, so difficult for the vulgar mind to understand. Such a story, not over new, might easily be made into a play, especially if priest and lady were allowed to be actuated by the old *motif*, and passion, so called, triumph over their sorrow and innocence. Browning's method was very different from this. His story, it may be said, is told with leaps and jerks, one personage after another telling it over and over, the most cumbrous, if often the most impressive way. In point of fact we have not the mere story, but each soul's statement of its case, and of the private world of motive and meaning, in

"The Ring and the Book."

Analysis of the poem.

which it lives and forms its purposes, and from which its actions come forth like the ear of corn from the teeming soil. The reader is placed upon the judgment seat which each pleads before him for life or death, the black soul of Guido revealing all its convolutions to the light of day, the noble Caponsacchi, indignant, in white light of manhood and knighthood and generous succour, the timid yet heroic woman in extreme youth, subjection and humility, yet high revolt when the point is touched beyond which submission becomes a treachery and cowardice. The work is unique in poetry. It is as powerful in treatment as it is novel in form. The secondary figures in the long plea of accusation and defence, the hum of life around them in all its inquiries and partisanships, the tribunal itself, the aged Pope who holds the scales of justice, are all placed before us in full potency of life and thought. No man in English or any other speech has mounted to the heights of Shakespeare ; but in its wonderful way "The Ring and the Book" stands on an eminence of its own, almost equally unapproachable. The fault—a fault of its conception and very essence, a necessity of being—is its extreme length, and the great strain which, notwithstanding that length, its great concentration and intensity demand ; but it is a poor criticism which thinks of faults in presence of such a creation, the addition as of a new planet flaming in life and truth among the stars that already shed

Powerful in treatment as it is novel in form.

Stands on an eminence of its own.

over us those rays that rule the night, attending the dawn and revelation of a brighter day.

When all is said that can be said about the greater works of a poet's life, it remains the fact that by far the greater majority of readers prefer him in his shorter poems, and that the widest circle of fame is that which rests upon the lyrics, the briefer breathings of poetry, the swallow-flights, as Lord Tennyson calls them. "In Memoriam" as we have noted, is but a collection of these, though so wonderfully threaded together, and instinct with an inspiration which the careless reader may miss or overlook, yet still receive into his heart of hearts a bit of melody, a fragment of verse which will last him all his life. If it were not for the innumerable dew-droppings of such verses the number would be few who would pursue Shelley through the long drawn sentences and fantastic meaning of "Alastor" or the "Revolt of Islam"; and even Wordsworth, the grave and great, would be apt to lose a great many of his worshippers if he met us only on the vast mountain-sides and valleys of the "Excursion," and "Prelude." Lord Tennyson and Mr. Browning have happily both given us enough of the shorter strains to satisfy the multitude. For three readers of "The Ring and the Book" there are perhaps a thousand who have galloped to Ghent upon that most impossible and unnecessary journey, and felt a lump rise in their throats when the good steed Roland fell in the market-place : or attended the Pied

A poet's widest circle of fame.

Shelley.

"Alastor." "Revolt of Islam."

Wordsworth "Excursion" and "Prelude."

Piper and his train in their disastrous pilgrimage into the unknown.

His later works.

Of Mr. Browning's publications after his great work there is comparatively little to say, though they are many in number. "Balaustion's Adventure," with its wonderful translation—with a modern light—into English, and all the nineteenth century thought suggested over the shoulder as it were of the Greek wife and martyr, was published in 1871, and was soon followed by "Prince Hohenstiel Schwangau," "Fifine at the Fair," 1872; "Red Cotton Nightcap Country," 1873; "Aristophanes' Apology," "The Agamemnon," the "Inn Album," "La Saisiaz," "Pacchiarotto," "Jocoseria," "Ferishtah's Fancies," and "Parleyings with Certain Persons of Importance," at intervals during the next dozen years. The "Dramatic Idyls" came in the middle of this long series in 1879 and 1880, the only volumes among them fully worthy of the poet's name. In these later poems he returned in a considerable degree to the more involved expression and obscure significance of his earliest works. Obscure significance we say, because much meaning was there, though often hard to follow out. His last work of all, a collection of poems unequal yet full of many fine things, to which he had given the fond title "Asolando" (as if Asolo, his favourite little Venetian city, had been a verb of poetic meaning, and he the actor of all that mingled thought and story in an ever present tense), was published on the very eve of his

His last work, "Asolando."

death—the news that his own country had eagerly received that last offering of his genius, being almost the last which his dying ears received. Thus poetry, so early taken up, so continuously served, was with him till the last moment of his life. He died on the 12th December, 1889, in the Palazzo Rezzonico, in Venice, the home of his only son, with all who were most dear to him around his bed.

Died at Venice, 1889

It might have been a question in chronology whether the other poet whose name is for ever linked with that of Robert Browning, the first of women-poets in her own race, perhaps in the world, should not have come before his in the record, the beginning of her work, preceding his by a few years, and the end of it by many. But it seemed undesirable to separate the great Twin Brethren of our generation from each other. Why it is that no woman (except in fiction) ever attains the highest rank in poetical literature, it is probably quite impossible ever to determine. There are many lines of limitation which the higher sense of the world as well as its prejudices prefers that a woman should not overstep—questions which it is best for all the interests of the race that she should not handle—which may have something to do with this inferiority; but great genius breaks all bonds, and these limitations are less and less respected as the world goes on. No such superlative genius has ever yet, so far as we know, been put into a woman's frame. And it is in

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1809–1861.

Women not yet attained the highest rank in poetry.

itself a confession of a lower level when we say that Mrs. Browning is the first of women-poets. In herself she is a person full of interest, with a story of subdued romance, and a nature full of poetical qualities, much more poet than her husband, though her poems are much less poetry, which is a paradox of which no explanation can be afforded. A wonderful girl, educated as few girls are, with all the classic inspirations that come from the poetry of the Greeks, she began to write at an extraordinarily early age, translating the Prometheus of Eschylus and even venturing into philosophy with a youthful essay on Mind, while still so young that Miss Mitford had "some difficulty in persuading a friend," that the young author "was old enough to be introduced into company, in technical language was *out*"—Elizabeth Barrett, this miraculous child, was early stricken down by illness and sorrow, and for many years had all the appearance of a confirmed invalid shut up in her room for life. It was from her sick-room that her first collection of poems, including many of her finest productions, came forth in 1844. In these, among many reminiscences and inspirations of her then singular education—poems of which "Pan is Dead" is much the most remarkable—there burst forth also the voice of her time, the voice of the enthusiast and philanthropist, which scarcely had become before one of the highest voices of poetry. "The Cry of the Children," which was in-

Mrs. Browning more a poet than her husband.

Essay on "Mind."

Her early illness.

"Pan is Dead."

"The Cry of the Children."

cluded in these first volumes, has a passion and pathos with which the soul of England was wrung, and formed at once the highest expression and stimulus of a great wave of popular feeling, very curious to find side by side with the half-triumphant, half-regretful proclamation of the Gods of Hellas, whose doom had gone forth from among the spheres.

One of the longest of Miss Barrett's poems, a poetical narrative hurriedly written, but full of picturesque life and power, has a curious and interesting reference to the other poet, unknown to her as yet, in whose name her own was to be merged, the future companion of her life. Browning's "Bell and Pomegranates," were in course of publication when this young lady rushed with flying pen through the tale of "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," describing her, the highborn lady in her old hereditary home, surrounded by everything that was best and most beautiful, enjoying all the highest luxuries of life, sometimes ancient, sometimes modern, the old poets and the new—among which latter class there might be for her refreshment,

"Lady Geraldine's Courtship."

> Of Browning one pomegranate which, when cut down through the middle,
> Showed a heart within blood-tinctured with a veined humanity."

Not so much this touch of anticipated acquaintance, but the possession of a mutual friend anxious to secure a moment's pleasure for the invalid,

Introduction of Browning to Miss Barrett.

brought these two together. She was on the sofa from which she could scarcely rise, from whence she apostrophises so prettily and touchingly the spaniel Flush, who was her devoted attendant, and herself not unlike that wistful, affectionate creature, with long curls half veiling her face, after the romantic fashion of the time—when the robust young poet, in the full flush of his manhood and strength, was introduced into her darkened room. He brought romance and all the glories of awakening life with him into that retirement, from whence a little while after he stole his wife, restoring her almost by a miracle to comparative health, and the open-air world, and a young woman's natural capacity for enjoyment. The marriage was not only opposed but forbidden by her family, notwithstanding that residence abroad had been announced to be her only chance of life and restoration. Love, which thus came unexpected, a little tardy, but all the more wonderful and sweet, into her seclusion, awakened in her a fountain of poetry more personal than anything that had gone before. The Gods of Hellas gave place to a more potent influence, and the course of her own singular courtship pushed aside all the Lady Geraldines of so much more commonplace an inspiration. Nothing prettier can be than the little glimpse into the tremulous newly-awakened hopes of the invalid which is afforded to us, when she describes herself as stepping breathlessly and furtively

Their marriage.

The "Gods of Hellas" superseded by a more potent influence.

out of the carriage in which she is taking the daily drive of routine, to stand for a moment on the grass, and feel herself upon her feet, in a tremulous ecstasy of new being. In a higher sense we have the same sensation in those "Sonnets from the Portuguese," tenderly veiled in the transparent mist of supposed translation where this awakening to life and love is shadowed forth. These Sonnets reach the highest poetic tide of her genius—the modest *abandon* of a heart overflowing with tenderness, and that surprise of delight as of the primal creation, which the true poet finds in each new thing that meets his sight and experience, but still more strongly in what was almost, in this particular case, a resurrection from the dead.

"Sonnets from the Portuguese."

The highest poetic tide of her genius.

Mrs. Browning's poems after her marriage were longer and of more importance so far as purpose and intention went. "Casa Guidi Windows" is an expression of her interest in the advancing course of Italian independence, for which she had the most passionate sympathy. The force of contemporary feeling which is poured forth in this poem, and also in the "Poems before Congress," which made them especially striking at the moment, is naturally rather to their disadvantage now, when all those agitations are happily overpast, and the inexperienced observer begins to wonder whether it can be possible that Italian Unity is so new as to have been the object of such warm, impassioned, almost unhoping desires, so short a

"Casa Guidi Windows."

"Poems before Congress."

time ago. That it should have been only the Austrian uniform which was visible from Casa Guidi windows where now the lively Bersaglieri pass daily at their running trot, so familiar, so completely a part of the scene, is all but incredible; or that the heart of an English lady there should have swelled so full of alarm and indignation and fear lest some disastrous compromise should cut the wings of her beloved adopted country. These poems must ever have an interest for the historical student, as showing what that period of agitation, fear, and hope, really was.

"Aurora Leigh," 1856.

The last great work of Mrs. Browning's life was the poem of "Aurora Leigh," published in 1856, the most complete monument perhaps of her genius. The remarkable thing in this work is its energy and strong poetical vitality, the rush and spring of life which is in a narrative, often lengthy, and of which the subject and story are not sufficient for the fervour and power of utterance. The development of the woman-poet, brought from a wild no-training among the Italian hills into a prim English feminine household, and inevitably assuming there that attitude of superiority to everything about her which is so contrary to that of true genius, and so melancholy a mistake in art—gives the reader at first a strong prepossession against, instead of in favour of, the young Aurora, so conscious as she is of her qualities among the limited persons and things about her.

The story, however, soon plunges, in the person of its hero, into those wild depths of philanthropy and sublime intention towards the poor and miserable, which to all sober eyes turn the way of madness. Romney's conclusion that it is his duty to marry the unfortunate Marian Erle, who has been the victim of brutal passion, thus showing how divine pity transcends all other forces, and that the innocent in will and intention can never be sullied—notwithstanding the fact that he does not love her, that indeed he loves another woman, conventionally suitable to him in every respect—is the climax of the tale ;—in which something of that perverse sense of duty in plunging into the most horrible depths, which is the natural balance of those limitations which the world imposes or endeavours to impose on women, is apparent through the indignant denunciations of too prevalent evil, and recognition of much belied and unacknowledged good. There are really admirable pieces of description and bursts of feeling in this poem, but it is throughout a little rhetorical, and its great quality, is as we have said, the remarkable sustained energy and vitality of the long volume of verse. Its story.

This "moon of poets," as she is beautifully called in the exquisite dedication to her of Browning's "Men and Women," lived for fifteen years after her marriage in tolerable enjoyment of life, under the united influences of her husband's tender and unceasing care, and the genial climate of Italy, the country The "Moon of Poets."

Died at Florence in 1861.

with which she so much identified herself that the great calamity suffered by that nation in the death of Count Cavour is said to have hastened her death, which took place in Florence in 1861.

The plays of Lord Tennyson and Mr. Browning.

Nothing has been said about what is no unimportant part of the work both of Lord Tennyson and Mr. Browning,—their plays. These, there is no doubt in both cases, it will be attempted to play spasmodically, or when their special enthusiasts find a chance, from time to time; but they will not, we think, ever find any general acceptance on the stage, where, whatever may have been the case in older days, it is not poetry that is wanted, but nimble action, and a system of events skilfully and closely constructed to suit certain practical needs. "Strafford," Mr. Browning's earliest drama, was indeed produced by Macready, and secured a limited and moderate success, but was not brought forward again. "The Blot on the Scutcheon" was promised, but never got to the stage at all. "Colombe's Birthday," a beautiful little dramatic sketch, has been played we believe by amateurs, and for those who love both the drama and the poet it would be difficult to imagine a more worthy exercise; but that also is too delicate for the bustling stage. Lord Tennyson's smaller plays have been produced with more decided, yet never with lasting success. "The Falcon," as performed by Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, was one of the most poetical and delightful performances ever seen in a theatre,

"Strafford."

"The Blot on the Scutcheon."

"Colombe's Birthday."

"The Falcon."

Mr. and Mrs Kendal.

but it was caviare to the general ; and "The Cup," though gorgeously produced by Mr. Irving, the actor most used to have his own way with the public, was also a short-lived play. It is enough, perhaps —might not one believe almost the best?—to be content with the great world of readers, who require no footlights, no artificial excitement of representation to hold them spell-bound to every utterance of the poet's own unaided tongue.

"The Cup." Mr. Irving.

No one will object to the chronological rule which places the kindly and beloved name of Thomas Hood next to these masters of song : not indeed that he was a master of song in the full sense of the words, but because "the heart within blood-tinctured with a veined humanity" was never shown with less ostentation and more effect than in the two remarkable poems which, early in the age of Victoria, suddenly penetrated, as with the swift arrow of its ancient national warfare, the mind of the nation. Philanthropy has done and said much in our day. A hundred professions of the desire to set all right, and conviction that this or that was the way to do it, have been published among us, and several notable writers have found in the attempt to call attention to a great abuse, or advocate a scheme of relief, the materials for their best work, and unlimited praise and reward therewith. But no such motive or object could ever be supposed to have been in the mind of Tom Hood when he darted forth, out of the over-

Thomas Hood, 1799-1845.

whelming pity of his heart, without logic or practical aim, the two poems without which now any collection of English poetry would be incomplete, The "Song of the Shirt" and the "Bridge of Sighs" —in which the poor seamstress and the poorer miserable creature from the streets, the shame of society and of humanity, had such an elegy of heart-rending pity and tenderness poured over them as filled the world with compunction and with tears. There was little that was didactic or practical in these famous songs of sorrow. Not his was the mission of teaching or the hand to build up reformatory institutions. He fulfilled the true office of poetry in giving vent to that boundless sympathy with suffering and remorseful horror of having any share in the system which makes it possible—which has become in our days the warmest sentiment of the common mind, little as even that has been able to do for the long established evils which mock reformation, or for those human incapacities and weaknesses which force so many struggling creatures downward to the lowest hopeless depths of worthless labour and starvation. Hood's poems did more perhaps to awaken the national heart than the most appalling statistics could have done, more a hundred times than recent attempts to make capital of vice and feed the impure imagination and gather profit from a vile curiosity, ever could accomplish. That dreadful image of the drowned creature "fashioned

"The Song of the Shirt." "The Bridge of Sighs."

He fulfilled the true office of poetry in expressing his boundless sympathy with suffering.

so slenderly " taken out of the tragic river with who could tell what piteous past behind her, and no refuge but the dark and awful tides surging between its black banks—has been impressed for ever on the imagination, intolerable yet perfect in the tragedy of its voiceless despair.

Hood had the most curiously different reputation behind him when he wrote these two wonderful ballads—if we can call them by so innocent and pleasant a name. He was the jester of his generation, the punster, the maker up of comic verses, so comical in their showers of fun and easy wit that the most serious of critics could not refuse to be amused, and had not the heart to find fault. The laugh, as so often, came out of a sad life, overwhelmed with sickness and care, and an unending struggle ; but it was too genuine to be assumed, and still rings true with all its twinkling fun and irrestrainable easy delight in the ridicule of circumstance. It was he who sung of the wet day through which.

The jester of his generation.

> " One small parasol goes weeping home from school.
> In company with six small scholars."

and yet again in how different a tone of the vigil by a deathbed :

> " We thought her dying when she slept.
> And sleeping when she died."

Thus he touched the key of the easiest tender humour and ot a sorrow beyond tears—of tragic and

heart-rending pain, and of laughing ridicule and trivial wit, like a merry-andrew one moment and in another almost a prophet. In addition to these extraordinary varieties of production, he had the gentle heart which is not always given along with the greatest genius, and has left a trace of love behind him, so that even the severest historian could scarcely mention Tom Hood without a softening in his tones. He was born in 1789, and died in 1845 in poverty and trouble—which indeed had been much the complexion of his life of wit and laughter all through.

Died in 1845, in poverty and trouble.

Winthorpe Mackworth Praed, though a very different man, and of antecedents so strongly contrasted that we might almost say they represented the antipodes of social life, had so much affinity to one side of Hood's poetry that his own was entirely humorous, bright with the sparkle of wit, and a perception of the comic side of society and nature. He died a young man in 1839, in the midst of everything that was most prosperous and successful. His poems were collected and republished out of the various periodicals to which they had been contributed only in 1864. He is chiefly remembered, we fear, as the author of several very clever charades in graceful verse which exercised the ingenuity of his contemporaries, and are, it is needless to say, very superior to the natural level of such productions.

Winthorpe Mackworth Praed, 1802–39.

It would seem scarcely necessary to do more than give the names of such graceful and delightful minor

poets as Bryan Procter (Barry Cornwall) and his daughter Adelaide Procter; R. H. Horne, the author of "Orion," a friend and esteemed correspondent of Mrs. Browning; Alaric Attila Watts, despite his terrible baptismal names, a gentle and genial singer; Charles Swain and Charles Mackay, the authors of many popular lyrics; the Rev. John Moultrie, who was Rector of Rugby during Dr. Arnold's reign, and his faithful friend and supporter, chiefly known by a touching poem of the elegiac order, "My Brother's Grave;" and D. M. Moir, the "Delta" of Blackwood, whose most memorable verses were of the same order, domestic elegies on the death of his children. Lord Houghton (Richard Monckton Milnes) perhaps demands a longer notice, if not for the value of his poetry, which includes many popular verses, at least for his loving-kindness to many of the less prosperous of his brother poets, and the considerable place he took in society as a sort of representative of the literary world. He was the friend of Carlyle, of Lord Tennyson, of every one known in literature, exerting himself as much as was possible for the soothing of Hood's latter days and well known for his extreme kindness to the impracticable young Scot, David Gray, who offered much promise of poetry, but died before that promise was accomplished. These are perhaps his chief claims to the attention of the later reader; but many of his lyrics linger in the hearts of his contemporaries, and give expression

Bryan Waller Procter (Barry Cornwall), 1787–1874.

Adelaide Anne Procter, 1824–64.

R. H. Horne 1807–1884.

Alaric Attila Watts.

Charles Swain, 1803–1874.

Charles Mackay, 1814.

Rev. John Moultrie, 1799–1874.

D. M. Moir.

Lord Houghton, 1809–85.

David Gray.

to much gentle reflection and feeling, which would scarcely fit into the larger words of poetry more exalted in tone.

Two or three poets of a different kind, to whom the gift of song was full of deadly seriousness, and sometimes of passion, may be also mentioned here.

Ebenezer Elliott, the "Corn Law Rhymer," 1779–1849.

Ebenezer Elliott, called the Corn Law Rhymer, poured forth many animated verses on the subject of the not very heroic struggle which led to the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1843, a struggle, however, which moved almost to passion the northern and manufacturing districts of the country—which have died a natural death with the occasion that brought them forth. He was, however, a very good specimen of the manly natural representative of the common people, the backbone of the nation—whose local fame is an advantage to his country, and who if he does not escape some of the mistakes natural to limited education and horizon, is far above the tragic folly of those who believe that everything that is wrong can be set right, and prosperity and universal good secured by act of Parliament. He died in 1849 and produced little except the aforesaid rhymes in her Majesty's reign.

Thomas Cooper, 1805.

"The Purgatory of Suicides. 1845."

Thomas Cooper (born 1805), of a more intense and impassioned school, published in 1845 a work of some note called the "Purgatory of Suicides," and still lives, having just received a tardy acknowledgment of his gifts, in the only way which is possible to the British Government, by a

small grant of money. To the same class belongs James Thomson, of a younger generation, born in 1834, who began life as a soldier schoolmaster, and during his service in the army became the friend of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, afterwards so well known, whose influence had much effect upon his life. The "City of Dreadful Night" published in 1874, procured him for a time considerable reputation. Those untrained but not impotent imaginations which, like the temper of Cassius "much enforced yieldeth a single spark," are remarkable illustrations of the power of that gift amid the humblest surroundings to strike forth tragic though broken notes into the poetry of the wealthiest age.

James Thomson, 1834-82.

"The City of Dreadful Night," 1874.

It is difficult to know how to characterise Martin Farquhar Tupper, whose strange productions have perhaps called forth more ridicule and sold more copies than those of all the rest of our poets put together. His "Proverbial Philosophy" was the most remarkable instance we know of a large assumption, which so imposed for a time upon the rank and file of readers that he was taken on his own estimate as a poet. The tamest and most commonplace sentiment and platitudes, in the form of dull aphorisms, filling a succession of large and dreary volumes, are the last things we should think of as likely to attract the enthusiasm of the crowd—yet they did so in the most astonishing way; and it was only the storms of laughter and ridicule which

Martin Farquhar Tupper, 1810.

"Proverbial Philosophy."

swept over him, from all whose opinion was worth having, that detached from him, with some resistance and great unwillingness, the devotion of the multitude. Of the countless editions which were produced of his works during the short period of their popularity, scarcely any are now to be seen, and it would be curious to inquire what has become of the volumes which lay on so many drawing-room tables, which were presented by anxious parents to good young people, and were held by gentle dulness as a sort of new revelation, in 1852 and the succeeding years. They have disappeared like *les neiges d'antan*, or rather like the pins which we lose in cartloads, and which most surely by this time have formed a metallic crust somewhere under the vestments of the earth.

Several dramatists of lofty aim, but moderate success, partly no doubt because of that loftiness of poetic intention, distinguished the early portion of this half-century. Mr. Serjeant Talfourd's "Ion" had really attained the honours of the stage just before its beginning, but his later work was less successful. Sir Henry Taylor did not, we believe, ever attempt to gain these honours. His chief dramatic poem, Philip Von Artevelde, has had the good fortune to please the critics, and has been greatly applauded and admired in those circles where applause is the most sweet, but it cannot be said ever to have caught the general ear. It has not sufficient force

Thomas Noon Talfourd. 1795-1854.

Sir Henry Taylor, 1800-86.

"Philip Von Artevelde."

either of life or of poetry to secure that wider audience, yet the place of the author among contemporary poets has always been high, though without this essential basis of fame. His other works—"Edwin the Fair," the "Virgin Widow," and "St. Clement's Eve"—have not, we think, gained even this *succès d'estime.*

"Edwin the Fair." "The Virgin Widow." "St. Clement's Eve."

James Sheridan Knowles, though very much less of a poet, nay scarcely at all to be included in that list, had a real success on the stage, where his plays for many years held an important place. "Virginius," the "Hunchback," and the "Love Chase" were the most popular of these works. The two latter are still occasionally represented, and though they have become old-fashioned, have not altogether lost their power, notwithstanding their perfectly artificial and conventional character and highflown sentiment. A painful but powerful tragedy, in which the poet endeavoured, as much as a man of the nineteenth century can, to throw himself into the atmosphere of the pre-Shakespearian tragedians, entitled "Death's Jest Book, or the Fool's Tragedy," was written some time before by Thomas Lovell Beddoes, a relation of the Edgeworth family. It was published after his death in 1850, but did not make any impression upon the public mind.

James Sheridan Knowles 1784-1862.

"Virginius." "The Hunchback." "The Love Chase."

"Death's Jest Book." Thomas Lovell Beddoes, 1803-49.

A group of poets may here come in who naturally class themselves in a little band, though perhaps it was the voice of a keen and triumphant ridicule

The Spasmodic School.

which tied the knot most closely, marking them with the title of the Spasmodic School, a title necessarily in some respects unjust, yet impossible to shake off or outlive. The first of these was Mr. Philip James Bailey, the author of "Festus," a work which gained considerable acceptance among the critics who at that period still looked with some respect at a work *de grande haleine*, but which was too lengthy, too philosophical and too ornate to claim much of the public attention. Sydney Dobell, whose first publication was made under the name of Sydney Yendys, an anagram of his Christian name, writing in a very similar strain, produced in 1850 "The Roman," also a work in which there were many fine passages and which attracted a good deal of notice. In both poets the intensity of sensation aimed at, and the exuberance of style, awoke a counter-blast of amused criticism which it was possible they might have recovered in the moderating influence of experience and years. It happened, however, that a somewhat ludicrous preface introduced another poet of very similar inspirations to the world soon after the appearance of these writers. A popular critic in Scotland, the Rev. George Gilfillan, who wrote much upon poetry and himself produced a little, of no great pretensions, was the author of a series of articles in which he bewailed the absence of poetical inspiration, and called upon heaven and earth to yield a new poet to his prayers. These prayers were answered in

Philip James Bailey. "Festus."

Sydney Dobell, 1824-74.

Rev. George Gilfillan.

the most curiously direct manner by the revelation, in very humble circumstances, of Alexander Smith, 1830-1867, a young Scotsman, who was so moved by Mr. Gilfillan's adjurations to all the gods, as to send him a manuscript, afterwards published under the title of "A Life Drama," and describing the development of a young poet among the most adverse conditions of life—a poem not without considerable merit, but steeped in the purple and gold of poetical metaphor and simile. The critic's cries of triumph and delight rang through his own country and penetrated to other skies. He had demanded a New Poet, and lo! here he was revealed in full garland and singing robes, as when Minerva came equipped and armed from her sublime parent's head.

Alexander Smith, 1830-67.

The din and clangour of the proclamation aroused attention everywhere and prepared as much good as evil fate for the neophyte, who was received by some with ready enthusiasm, but by others with an inclination to smile not less pronounced and ready. For a little while indeed the tide ran full in his favour, and he was admitted without much demur into the circle of contemporary poets. The "Life Drama" was published in 1853, and in the same year Mr. Dobell produced "Balder," a poem in which the over-decoration of his style, and attempted intensity of effect, were not chastened but rather increased. The combination of these poems and of the ludicrous incidents of Mr. Smith's discovery, so to speak, by the

"Life Drama," 1853.

"Balder," 1853.

eager critic—caught the fancy of a wicked wit, himself already a master of verse, especially in its more humorous expression, William Edmonstone Aytoun (1813-1865), a member of the band of Blackwood, always noted for a keen enjoyment in the exercise of satirical criticism. Aytoun had all the traditions of the elder race of poets behind him, as well as an unfeigned delight in the demolishment of pretence, and the cutting down of intruders into the sacred paths of literature. He did not, according to the time-honoured fiction which describes Keats as having been killed, and Wordsworth held back, by articles in the reviews, assail these new poets in the ordinary ways of criticism. The review in "Blackwood's Magazine," which buried them in a humorous explosion, was not directed against either "Balder" or the "Life Drama," but was a review of the supposed dramatic poem of "Firmilian," which professed to be also an embodiment of a poet's experiences. The utter extravagance of the incidents did not, as the laughing critic expected, immediately betray to the puzzled reader its satirical intention, and the supposed extracts given were so clever that Aytoun was induced to extend it into an actual poem, and to publish it as "Firmilian, a Spasmodic Tragedy." The verse in many ways was much more vigorous than the serious models which it turned into ridicule, and though the simple-minded public, we think, never fully understood the joke, being puzzled to understand how any-

William Edmonstone Aytoun, 1813-65.

"Firmilian."

thing so good could have been intended as a mere pleasantry, the effect upon the Spasmodic School was overwhelming and final. Mr. Smith, the youngest of the band, indeed attempted another work, "Edwin of Deira," which was published in 1861, but had no particular effect. In the mean time, however, Mr. Dobell and Mr. Smith had united in a volume of sonnets on the war (1855) which, produced by, and chiming in with the strong popular and national feeling roused by the war in the Crimea, found much greater access to the public approval.

"Edwin of Deira."

CHAPTER VI.

OF CHARLES DICKENS AND WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, AND OF THE OLDER NOVELISTS.

The art of fiction at the commencement of our period must be regarded as in a state of transition. The great revolution effected by the Waverley Novels was already an accomplished fact, but it had not yet had time to bear its full fruit, and the modern novel, as we understand it, was at best only struggling into existence. A new influence of a different kind had now arisen, the effect of which it is difficult to over-estimate. It may, indeed, be said that Dickens's novels—at least the earlier and more powerful ones—are hardly novels in the ordinary sense of the

The art of fiction in a state of transition.

Revolution effected by the Waverley Novels.

Effect of Dickens's Novels.

term ; but the effect that they have produced on the fiction, not only of England but of foreign countries also, is singularly widespread. Greater novelists have produced finer works of art, but hardly any have succeeded in founding so varied and extensive a school of fiction.

Charles Dickens, 1812-70.

Charles Dickens was born in 1812 at Portsea, where his father, who was a clerk in the Navy Pay Office, had his employment in the Portsmouth dockyard.

His early days.

His early days, however, were spent chiefly at Chatham, to which his father was transferred when little Charles was only four years of age. His childhood was not a happy one, but the Chatham period was the most prosperous part of it ; he had some elementary education at a small school kept by a Baptist minister named Giles, whom he always regarded with respect and affection, and the atmosphere of his home was as yet little clouded.

His father, John Dickens.

In 1821 his father, John Dickens, whose salary had been lowered in consequence of changes in the official system, came to London, where his family occupied a wretched lodging in Camden Town, and lived in straitened circumstances, oppressed by rapidly increasing debts, which resulted, in another year or so, in the arrest and imprisonment of the unhappy head of the household.

Removal of the family to London.

Their straitened circumstances.

From this time commenced that miserable existence of struggle and hardship, of which much is recorded in "David Copperfield." The circumstances, of course, were not actually those given in the novel,

and a great deal of trouble has been uselessly expended in attempting to identify facts and figures which Dickens had purposely altered; but there is still much stern reality underlying the fictitious scenes of the story. There seems no reasonable ground for identifying John Dickens with Mr. Micawber, but the strange shifts to which the Micawber family were put, the visits of the little boy with his precocious knowledge to the pawnbroker's shop, and the scenes of prison life, refer to actual episodes in the history of the Dickens household.

His first employment

Charles Dickens, as a child, was, however, in reality put to as wretched work as David Copperfield, being employed in a blacking warehouse, in which a cousin of his had an interest, to paste labels on the blacking bottles. At one time he was placed in the window of the shop to do his work there, that all the world might see what a business the firm were doing. After some years of this drudgery his father, who had taken the benefit of the Act for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors, came out of prison, and being temporarily free of his difficulties, was able to give Charles some education, but the two years which the latter spent at a small Hampstead school do not seem to have had much effect upon him. Such learning as he had, apart from the strange odds and ends of knowledge picked up in the London streets, was chiefly derived from the study of an old collection of novels and tales, in which Fielding and

His field of early reading.

Smollett figured most largely, supplemented in later days by a course of hard reading at the British Museum. At an early age, Dickens was obliged to earn his bread, and became successively a solicitor's clerk and a reporter for the press; he had even at one time some thoughts of the stage, for which he displayed throughout his life a remarkable aptitude.

His first story in the "Monthly Magazine."

He was just of age when one evening, with fear and trembling, he dropped into the letter-box of the "Monthly Magazine" his first story, a sketch afterwards entitled "Mr. Minns and his Cousin," which was reprinted in the "Sketches by Boz." For timid young writers, doubtful of their own powers, there should be much comfort in the study of this first attempt; it is encouraging to think that the perpetrator of so atrocious a piece of balderdash lived to create in later days such characters as Dick Swiveller and Mr. Micawber, Sam Weller and Mrs. Gamp. The "Monthly Magazine" accepted this and other sketches, and, though it could not afford to pay for them, gave the young author his first lift in life.

Parliamentary reporter.

He obtained a post as a parliamentary reporter for the "Morning Chronicle" in 1834, and was engaged to contribute sketches to the affiliated "Evening Chronicle," then conducted by his future father-in-law, George Hogarth. A collection of these papers, under

"Sketches by Boz," 1836.

the title of "Sketches by Boz,"—a *nom de plume* taken from the nickname of a young brother—was published in 1836 and attracted an attention which

appears to us much above their merits. The same year saw the commencement of a work which gave Dickens at once an acknowledged rank at the head of his profession. The author of "Pickwick" had nothing to fear from the competition of the most eminent writers of the day.

Robert Seymour.

A well-known comic artist of the day, Robert Seymour, had suggested to Messrs. Chapman & Hall a series of humorous pictures, chiefly of incompetent sportsmen, with letterpress to match, and the task of composing the latter was offered to the young author of the "Sketches by Boz." Dickens refused to accept this arrangement, but agreed to supply comic scenes at his own discretion, to be illustrated by such plates as would "arise naturally out of the text." Seymour only lived to illustrate the first number of the "Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club," but there are traces of his original plan to be found in Mr. Winkle's various misadventures on horseback and on the ice, with the rooks and with the partridges. For the subsequent illustrations Hablot Browne—better known as "Phiz"—was chosen out of a number of candidates, Thackeray being among the rejected. The first numbers of the book—which was issued in twenty monthly parts—at once took the public fancy, laying the foundation of a popularity which has never decreased. There is perhaps no book more widely known in the English language, nor, strangely

"Pickwick."

Hablot Browne—"Phiz."

Intensely national in its character.

Its humour.

enough, many which have been received with such favour on the Continent, though it is intensely national in character. It is, indeed, an almost perfect specimen of the strictly English quality of fun—using English in its very narrowest sense as applying only to that part of her Majesty's dominions called England—which differs as greatly from the humour of Scotland and Ireland as from French wit or American extravagance. We could quote instances of more genuinely humorous scenes than that of the trial in "Pickwick," but we cannot think of anything so irresistibly funny. It is hardly high comedy, but neither is it merely farcical; and it has the great qualities of being always good-humoured and hardly ever grotesque.

Its literary construction.

Another secret of the success of "Pickwick," perhaps, is that it is not in the ordinary sense of the word, a novel. There is no continuous story to speak of, only a collection of amusing scenes of high average excellence, though of course containing some that are of inferior merit. Nor do we find in "Pickwick" any real delineation of character, with the exception, perhaps, of the Wellers, who are, however, as little real as they are always amusing. In this respect, Dickens undoubtedly improved in his later works, though we do not regard him as having reached at any time any particular eminence as a story-teller. An episode in a story he could recount with spirit and power, sometimes of the most

tragic kind, as in the career of Bill Sikes before and after the murder of Nancy, in the account of the Gordon Riots, and in a lighter vein the Yorkshire school episode in "Nicholas Nickleby," and some strong passages in the "Tale of Two Cities." But a larger and more elaborate plot, such as was required in those of his works which more resembled the ordinary novel in form, was not a task suited to his powers. The details become too intricate, the want of a proper sequence in the events often shows itself, and it becomes necessary to have recourse to unnatural *tours de force*, such for instance as the protracted artifice of old Martin Chuzzlewit in playing the part of an imbecile old man to deceive Pecksniff, —an expedient repeated in "Our Mutual Friend"— to bring about the catastrophe. Such difficulties as these, however, belong to a later period of Dickens's career.

About the time of the publication of "Pickwick" Dickens made some attempts at dramatic writing, producing some slight trifles, which were acted with tolerable success; but he did not persevere in this branch of literature, though a great many adaptations of his novels appeared on the stage. In 1836 he became the first editor of "Bentley's Miscellany," to which he contributed his second novel, "Oliver Twist." This was a story with a purpose, or rather with two purposes; the first to expose the working of the Poor Laws, and the second to give a genuine

Editor of "Bentley's Miscellany," 1836.

"Oliver Twist."

picture of the life of the criminal classes as a kind of antidote to the flavour of romance with which crime was surrounded in such novels as Ainsworth's "Jack Sheppard," and Bulwer's "Paul Clifford." In the latter end he succeeded to a certain extent; Fagin, the hideous schoolmaster in crime, and the unredeemably brutal Sikes were acknowledged to be genuine pictures of types that did exist in actual life, and they certainly represent crime in its most unvarnished form. With regard to the other object, we fear that though generations will laugh over Mr. Bumble, they are not likely to think much of the purpose with which he was put before the world. For the rest, while Bumble, Fagin, the Artful Dodger, and one or two other characters are as good as they can be, there is a great deal of inferior work in "Oliver Twist;" the pathos is mawkish, as it usually is in Dickens's works, and the absurdly melodramatic story of Oliver's birth, with the machinations of the impossible villian Monks, is little worthy of the author, though he has sinned repeatedly in the same way, and does not seem to have known better, strange as it may seem to say so. We can only say in his defence that it may have been inserted as a concession to the prejudices of novel readers.

"Nicholas Nickleby," 1838.

The remainder of his principal works, we may be allowed to name together, in order to get a comprehensive glance at their merits and defects. "Nicho-

las Nickleby" was commenced in 1838 and published in monthly numbers, as were also "Martin Chuzzlewit" (1843-4), "Dombey and Son" (1846–48), "David Copperfield" (1849–50), and "Bleak House" (1852–53). An exception to the rule was "Master Humphrey's Clock,"—containing the stories of "The Old Curiosity Shop" and "Barnaby Rudge," together with a padding of many inferior scenes designed to represent the meetings of a sort of club,—which came out in eighty-eight weekly numbers in the years 1840 and 1841. These works are, of course, of varying merit; but they present so many features of resemblance that it seems natural to treat them together. They are all cast more in the form of an ordinary novel than "Pickwick," or even "Oliver Twist," but the deficiencies of the plot in every case show, as we have already said, that Dickens was rather burdened by the necessity of adhering to this system. On the other hand the individual characters in these books are often of the very highest excellence, though we must admit that the best of them are not of a kind that we have often met or expect to meet in real life. Mr. Micawber in "David Copperfield," Dick Swiveller in the "Old Curiosity Shop," are in our opinion unsurpassed and unsurpassable; we should have lost much if we had not met, in "Nicholas Nickleby," with Mr. Squeers and the Crummles company. In "Martin Chuzzlewit," though it is as a whole inferior to these, are several

"Martin Chuzzlewit," 1843–44.
"Dombey and Son," 1846–48.
"David Copperfield," 1849–50.
"Bleak House," 1852–53.
"Master Humphrey's Clock."
"The Old Curiosity Shop."
"Barnaby Rudge."

The individual characters in his books.

immortal figures, Pecksniff, Mark Tapley and the unrivalled Mrs. Gamp, with her mythical friend Mrs. Harris. Even in the other books quoted we have a pleased recollection of Captain Cuttle and Mr. Toots, Inspector Buckett, Simon Tappertit and John Willet. These personages light up the scenes with unfailing life and mirth. It is them we seek, not the excitement of story nor that later fashion of excitement, the analysis of character, which critics of the present day are so apt to put in the highest place as the object of fiction. Dickens was, fortunately for us, no analyst. He neither anatomises nor explains the amusing and, it must be allowed, extraordinary persons whom he puts before us. We are compelled even to confess that they are generally very odd people; but they justify their creation amply by living, acting, and expressing themselves in the drollest and most amusing fashion, under our very eyes. They live not because their author shows us their machinery, but because we are personally acquainted with themselves.

His sentiment and pathos.

We are free to admit that we have no admiration at all for Dickens's sentimental or pathetic passages; we are only moved to weariness by

"That Smike's unceasing drivellings and those everlasting Nells."

We feel no interest in little Paul Dombey, and the maunderings of Jo leave our withers unwrung. And nothing can be more surprising than to see how the

purely conventional survives in the midst of the wonderful new life which Dickens poured into the forms of fiction. Such totally unreal personages as Ralph Nickleby, Sir Mulberry Hawks, Steerforth, Quilp, Mr. Dombey, Sir Leicester Dedlock, etc., various as are their other attributes, all agree in this point; they may perhaps have their counterparts in the waters under the earth, but certainly in the other localities mentioned in the second commandment, their like has not been seen.

His genius displayed in his comic characters.

It is indeed, however, almost exclusively in his comic characters that the genius of Dickens is really displayed. The few exceptions are chiefly to be found in the criminal class: Bill Sikes, for instance, is a villain to be proud of, and there is a good deal of truth in the repulsive figure of Jonas Chuzzlewit. If we add that there is not much to be said for Dickens's heroes we must admit that this is a point in which even the greatest have often failed. Nicholas Nickleby, however is a real man, not to say a brother, though he fails considerably towards the end of his history when he and we are suddenly introduced to the walking lady who is dragged, neck and heels, into the story in order that he may fall in love with her. Martin Chuzzlewit, however, is not without many redeeming faults. The pure and blameless heroines such as Agnes in "David Copperfield," when they are not utterly insignificant, are still more completely without interest. One page of the Marchioness is worth all

The heroines.

the Kates and Ruths put together. It is an amiable fault to paint virtue in the finest colours, but it is unfortunate when they are mere streaks of pure white, such as fatigue the eye to rest upon. In this imperfect world we are too apt to desire the variety imparted by a a few spots of—perhaps, not black quite—but at least, dark grey. M. Gustave Droz has informed us that the society in paradise is largely composed of excellent *bourgeois*, who spend their hours of beatific leisure in recounting one to the other, "for example of life and instruction of manners," the circumstances preceding and accompanying "*mon premier véniel.*" In this heaven Dickens's good people should find a congenial place; and that is a highly desirable consummation for all of us.

M. Gustave Droz.

An important part of Dickens's work consists of his famous "Christmas Books," and one which sets a new and unhappily popular fashion, much worked out since his time. From 1841, when the first of these, the "Christmas Carol," appeared, to 1848, when the regular series closed with the "Haunted Man," these annuals were eagerly looked forward to and devoured when they did appear by an appreciative public. To us they seem to have been rather overestimated, but we must admit to having more sympathy with Mr. Scrooge's opinion of the "humbug" which underlies so much of the exaggerated enthusiasm about Christmas than with his conversion to the same. This may be thought to disable our

"Christmas Books."

The "Christmas Carol."

judgment on the matter; yet we should allow the "Christmas Carol" to be a work of genius in its way. The later ones seem to diminish in merit as they go on. The "Chimes" is not so good as the "Carol," the "Cricket on the Hearth" is inferior to the "Chimes." The "Cricket," by the way, was extremely successful on the stage, not less than four adaptations of it being played in London at the same time. Stories of a similar character from his own and other pens continued for a number of years to be published in the Christmas numbers of Dickens's magazines, "Household Words" and "All the Year Round."

"The Chimes." "The Cricket on the Hearth."

For the career of Dickens as a journalist and periodical writer, we have to go back some years. He had contributed from time to time to the newspapers, especially the "Examiner" and the "Morning Chronicle," and when the "Daily News" was started in 1846, Dickens was chosen to be its first editor, a rather hazardous selection. He does not seem to have been a good editor; no doubt, his relations with his staff would be delightfully genial, and his room in the office was a pleasant haunt, much frequented by his friends, but the publisher admitted to one of Dickens's latest biographers that "he was not sure that the work did not sometimes begin after the editor had left!" In a very short time he relinquished the editorial chair, with a sense of delighted emancipation, to his friend, John Foster.

As a journalist and periodical writer.

Magazine literature, which did not make so constant a claim upon him seems to have been more to his taste, but it was not till 1849 that he found an opening congenial to him in the little periodical which he founded and called by the not very appropriate name of "Household Words." This periodical which gave Dickens a convenient watch-tower from which to cry aloud on all subjects without the necessity of sparing, was continued till 1858, when a quarrel arose between him and his publishers regarding a statement upon his personal affairs which he had thought fit to put into the magazine. In the beginning of the next year he transferred his name and prestige to another new periodical put forth by a different publisher, under the title of "All the Year Round." In the former periodical had appeared the novel "Hard Times," which contains in the episode of Stephen and Rachel one of the best pieces of serious writing which Dickens ever did. In "All the Year Round" were published the "Tale of Two Cities" (1859), in which some scenes of the French revolution are introduced in a lively and wonderful manner, and which has had a lasting reputation; and "Great Expectations" (1860–61), which is chiefly remarkable as containing one exceptionally strong situation worked out with great power and art. Besides these, we have in the later years of Dickens's life his least successful works,—"Little Dorrit," "Our Mutual Friend," and the unfinished "Edwin

"Household Words," 1849.

"All the Year Round."

"Hard Times."

"Tale of Two Cities."

"Great Expectations."

"Little Dorrit."

Drood," of none of which it is necessary to speak. He died in 1870. Besides his absolutely literary work, Dickens was much engaged, in the later part of his life, in giving readings from his own books, which were conducted with equal ability and profit—a practice subsequently followed by other eminent writers, especially by his great contemporary, Thackeray. He was especially fitted for such work by his remarkable dramatic powers, often exhibited in theatricals, by the private company started by him and his friend Wilkie Collins. "Ah, Mr. Dickens," said a veteran bearer of banners at one of the theatres to him, "if it hadn't been for them books, what an actor you would have made!" We believe there was no exaggeration in this criticism.

"Edwin Drood."

His dramatic powers.

It is certainly not as the greater of the two principal writers of fiction in our period that we have given the priority to Dickens, nor even as the elder. But Dickens, though a year younger than his brilliant rival, Thackeray, had won his place in the front ranks of literature at a time when the latter was only amusing the world by sketches and short stories which did not even show any distinct promise of the great works that were to follow. William Makepeace Thackeray was born at Calcutta in 1811, the son of an Indian Civil Servant, and connected on both sides of the house with various departments of the Honourable East

William Makepeace Thackeray. 1811–63.

His education.

India Company's government. Being sent home early, according to custom, he was educated at the Charterhouse and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he only remained a short time. On leaving Cambridge he migrated to Weimar, and thence to Paris, where he devoted himself to the study of art, which he then intended to take up as a profession.

Loss of his fortune.

In 1832 he came into his small fortune and set to work to dissipate it as soon as possible. Various incidents in his novels throw a light on the manner in which that fortune disappeared; some part would seem to have gone in the Bundelcund Banking Company; some found its way to the pockets of Mr. Deuceace, but the greater part was probably expended in the most easy and expeditious of all ways of losing money, the establishment of a newspaper. Thackeray had already made some small efforts, while at Cambridge, at the kind of infant journalism which finds favour in the eyes of the Universities, of which some scraps have been preserved to us. Nothing, however, seems to be left to show for such a costly venture as the "National Standard" or its successor, the "Constitutional." These two journals, if they did nothing else, rendered their proprietor a service of some value, though of that description which, as Dugald Dagetty says, "excites no benevolence towards the perpetrator." Between them, they ruined Thackeray—not to mention a harmless, necessary

Newspaper ventures.

The "National Standard."

The "Constitutional."

step-father, whose money seems to have been lost too;—and obliged him to work for his living. He chose literature finally as a profession in preference to art, though he still did something in the latter department by illustrating his own books and those of others.

Adopts literature as a profession in preference to art.

In 1837 Thackeray got the introduction to "Fraser's Magazine" which was the first step of his real career. Maginn, the editor, recognized his talent at once, and Thackeray was admitted to that motley society of poets, philosophers and wits, whom Maclise's picture represents as assembled at Fraser's house in Regent Street. The first important contribution of the newcomer was the "History of Samuel Titmarsh," and the "Great Hogarty Diamond," a clever sketch, which does not, however, give any particular foretaste of what was to come. The "Yellowplush Papers," which followed, were more successful. These were originally intended to be merely occasional satirical papers, but they soon took the form of a story, relating the adventures of Jeames Yellowplush's master, the swindler Deuceace. There is a great deal of power in this disagreeable story; Deuceace is represented from the very first as the most absolutely unredeemable scoundrel, who not only lives by cheating at cards, but robs his accomplices in swindling; yet he is confronted with admirable art by the still deeper and abler villain, his father. It is a record of vice unrelieved, carried

Introduction to "Fraser's Magazine."

Maclise's picture.

"History of Samuel Titmarsh."

"Great Hogarty Diamond."

"The Yellowplush Papers."

on through a succession of intrigues and counterplots with an utterly cynical disregard of any but the most sordid motives, and culminating in one of the most awful pictures which we have ever met with. Deuceace has been out-manœuvred by his father in fortune-hunting, and has married the wrong person of two ladies between whom a great inheritance is known to lie, the older rascal having secured the real heiress. The winning pair, driving in the *Bois de Boulogne*, come upon the losers in the game, sitting on a bench in the miserable companionship to which they are doomed, and stop a moment to enjoy their triumph. In impotent rage and despair, the starving wretch on the bench strikes the poor woman in whom he only sees a useless incumbrance, and the successful cheats in the carriage drive on with shouts of laughter. It is a hideous picture, but one of immense power.

Thackeray had at this early period given a certain proof of the great possibilities within him, but with work of this kind he was not at all likely to attain any measure of popularity. The more comic experiences of Jeames, which are certainly extremely funny, though they never reached the same level of literary ability, were received with greater favour, such as was accorded to the weaker continuation published some years later in "Punch," which tells of the sudden affluence of James de la Pluche. Among other contributions to Fraser were the still

"Punch."

"James de la Pluche."

more repulsive "Story of Catherine," the "Confessions of George Fitz-Boodle,"—which we would almost venture to call dull—and the first of his greater works, the "Luck of Barry Lyndon; a Romance of the Last Century. By Fitz-Boodle," to quote the title under which the first number appeared in January, 1844. The story of Barry Lyndon is again the story of a rogue, who tells his own tale with a cynical honesty, not seeing anything to be ashamed of in the events which he chronicles. This is a truly masterly study; the growth of the character from the young Redmond Barry, who is not a badly disposed boy,—through the various corrupting stages of his life—as a common soldier in the English and Prussian services, at a time when the atmosphere of a regiment was far worse than anything we can conceive in our day—as a youthful impostor under circumstances of strong temptation, as a police spy, a professional gambler, a wealthy man about town in a very wild age, and an Irish landlord with almost absolute power and responsible to no one,—down to the finished ruffian whose excesses and cruelties are calmly set down by his own pen—is gradually mapped out before us in a manner which makes each change for the worse follow almost logically upon the preceding one. In collected editions of Thackeray's works it is common to put "Esmond," and "Barry Lyndon," in the same volume,—an excellent arrangement as it seems to us, for nothing can bear greater testimony

"Story of Catherine."

"Confessions of George Fitz-Boodle."

"Luck of Barry Lyndon."

A masterly study.

to the extent and versatility of Thackeray's genius than the fact that he could relate, with so profound an insight into the character of each, the lives of two such utterly different men, from their own point of view. It should be added that "Barry Lyndon," is also remarkable as containing some of the first of Thackeray's admirable historical sketches, such as the story of the French mutineer, Blondel, and the episode of the captivity and execution of the faithless Princess of X——.

Meanwhile Thackeray had found other ways of getting at the public ear, independently of the ministry of "Fraser." In 1840 he produced his first sketches of travel, under the title of the "Paris Sketch Book"; in 1843 followed the "Irish Sketch Book," and in 1844 his "Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo." We would not give a particularly high place to these slight productions, though they contain occasional pieces of great merit. The best known perhaps is the wonderfully descriptive poem of the "White Squall," with all its life and humour and the exquisitely tender touch at the end :—

"Paris Sketch Book," 1840.

"Irish Sketch Book," 1843.

"Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo."

"The White Squall."

> "I thought while day was breaking
> My little girls were waking
> And smiling and making
> A prayer at home for me."

Thackeray also wrote in the "New Monthly Magazine," and in 1843 became a member of the

staff of "Punch," which had been started two years before. His connection with the latter lasted for ten years, being finally broken off in 1854, as he himself says, "on account of Mr. Punch's assaults on the present Emperor of the French nation, whose anger "Jeames" thought it was unpatriotic to arouse." His most important contributions had been the "Snob Papers," afterwards republished under the title of the "Book of Snobs." It is difficult to form an accurate judgment of this singular production; taken merely as a piece of humorous writing it approaches the sublime, but we doubt whether, on the whole, it adds much to Thackeray's reputation. The philosophy of it seems faulty, the judgments are too sweeping; we ourselves have rarely, if ever, met a human being who is not a snob according to one or other of Thackeray's definitions, and the author himself, judged from his books only, would certainly fall into more than one of his own categories. Anthony Trollope, in the biography of Thackeray—alas! the only and a most unsatisfactory one—contributed to Mr. John Morley's "English Men of Letters," gives a very fair estimate of the unfair condemnations into which he was liable to be led in this respect. "He saw something," says the biographer, "that was distasteful, and a man instantly became a snob in his estimation . . . . . The little courtesies of the world and the little discourtesies became snobbish to him. A man could

His connection with "Punch."

"Book of Snobs."

Anthony Trollope's Biography of Thackeray in "English Men of Letters."

not wear his hat, or carry his umbrella, or mount his horse, without falling into some error of snobbism before his hypercritical eyes. St. Michael would have carried his armour amiss, and St. Cecilia would have been snobbish as she twanged her harp."

"Vanity Fair," 1846.

The first of Thackeray's great works appeared in 1846. "Vanity Fair" was a very bold attempt. It was published in monthly numbers after the manner of Dickens, and it was not completed in less than two years. The publishing world had many doubts about it, and it received many rebuffs before being accepted by Messrs. Bradbury & Evans, the publishers of "Punch." More than this, it introduced into an early number the wildly daring sketch of Sir Pitt Crawley as he appeared in his London house, which, Trollope says, "has always been to me a stretch of audacity which I have been unable to understand," —as if formally challenging conventionality and criticism to take up their weapons in time and slay the book in its youth before it could shock the world yet more. But the world, which is not such a fool as it looks, refused to be shocked, and took Thackeray to its bosom instead. Before "Vanity Fair," was nearly finished, he was already recognized on all hands as one of the very first writers of his day. His popularity from that time was established, and the next few years present an unbroken series of triumphs. "Pendennis," in monthly numbers, appeared in 1850, and the "Newcomes" in a similar

"Pendennis," 1850. "The Newcomes," 1853–54.

form in 1853–54. "Esmond," which came before the public at once as a whole, was published between them in 1852. To these may be added "The Virginians," a sort of sequel to Esmond, published in numbers in 1857–59.

"Esmond," 1852.

"The Virginians," 1857–59.

The greatest of these, in its immense scope and extraordinary variety of material, is, to our mind, the first. "Vanity Fair" has many claims to greatness. It does not depend on any special story,—indeed there is no particular plot in the book,—nor, in spite of the great prominence given to Becky Sharp, does it depend upon one or two characters only. It is one of the most remarkable satires on English society which has ever appeared; but it is not as a satire alone that it has gained its position as the greatest work of fiction of this period, it is at the same time a moving panorama of life, with a hundred side-scenes and episodes of interest, and with a reality and fullness of humanity which have never been surpassed. The little romances, if they may be called so, of Becky Sharp and Amelia Sedley, come to an end at a very early period of the book; but each catastrophe, as it is brought about, introduces us to another train of incidents and carries on that endless drama of social existence which never pauses. The deaths of Sir Pitt and of Miss Crawley close up avenues of the tale only to open new ones in a different direction. Even the fall of Rebecca is not the end of the exhibition which the showman

"Vanity Fair" the greatest of his works.

A remarkable satire on English society.

A moving panorama of life.

has to put before us. The whole work is, indeed, very like a show, in which one set of scenes attract our attention after another, not necessarily connected but yet falling into a general harmony, without breaks or sharp transitions to turn the mind back from its natural course. The puppets succeed each other so deftly that we hardly can persuade ourselves that the scene has been changed. The long awkward figure of the Major tumbling over his sword is still before our eyes, when old Sir Pitt blunders on with his pipe, or the Wicked Nobleman comes grinning and posturing to the front. So Thackeray himself would have had it, as, indeed, he says in his preface; and so the work of that unparalleled showman does naturally present itself to us.

Scenes lacking in interest

Still we must admit that there is one side of the picture, or one set of scenes in the show which is rather lacking in interest; we refer, of course, to those which relate to the history of Amelia Sedley. In all those admirable scenes, in which the delicious fooling of the wooing of Jos. Sedley is the main incident, she is a charming figure, and we do not regret her absurd devotion to that incarnation of the British snob, George Osborne. But in the later part of her life, when we are called upon to weep over the conventional young widow and to look on at a wearisome series of ignoble conflicts with her mother and the petty details of the Camden Town household to which its poverty fails to impart any interest,

our sympathy is no longer aroused. Much better is the figure of Dobbin, but even here we have a sort of conventionality of virtuous character which is not worthy of the company into which it is introduced. An odd defence of the weakness of the Dobbin and Amelia side of the book has been set up, to the effect that it is the faithfulness of the pictures which calls forth our objections. We admire the knaves of the story, because Thackeray drew knaves as they really are, and such pictures are many-sided and attractive; on the other hand, he drew good people as they are, and we find them colourless and uninteresting, because they really are so. This can only be the view of a shallow and cynical onlooker, never of a wise man like Thackeray, who knew that there is nothing upon earth so nearly approaching greatness as that which is entirely good. What, if such a theory hold good, are we to think of Dr. Primrose, of Parson Adams, or of Thackeray's own Colonel Newcome? Perhaps the real cause of this error consists in the misunderstanding of what is really good. When Cromwell complained of the incapable officers who were appointed solely out of consideration for their good birth, he spoke of such men as being "gentlemen and nothing more;" but lest men should ask what more there could be, he was careful to add "I honour a gentleman that is so indeed." It is, in fact, because this negative side of goodness, which is often nothing more than the absence of faults, or,

His "knaves" and "good people."

Cromwell's estimate of a gentleman.

as we should say loosely, "goodness and nothing more," is presented to us alone, that we prefer the spiced wines of the naughty Becky to the sugared milk-and-water of Amelia.

Development of Thackeray's "good" characters.

It is, indeed, a curious study to observe the gradual development of Thackeray's "good" characters. At the outset he appears to have regarded himself as chiefly qualified to describe rogues and hypocrites; virtue was not so much in the line of the biographer of Barry Lyndon and Catherine Hayes, the historian of the Deuceace family and of "The Fatal Boots." But when composing his great attack upon the faults and pretences of English society, he became aware that this was a mistaken place and that the public, if nothing more, demanded a picture in which both sides should appear. As Kant said,—or rather as Heine made him say,—when he altered his intention of remodelling the cosmic system without the interposition of any Deity whatever, out of compassion for the blubberings of honest Franz, trudging dutifully behind his master with the big umbrella, "*Il faut un Dieu à ce pauvre Franz.*" So Thackeray, finding that virtuous characters were a necessity, chose at first those which came readiest to his hand, and those were not unnaturally of the conventional milk-and-water type. They could not help improving a little in his hands, but they still bore the stamp of the mawkish original, which seemed good enough for the public. But as he went on, a better instinct arose within him;

it became irksome to so finished a workman to leave one side of his piece inferior to the others, and in his second work, though Mrs. Pendennis is still a somewhat silly person notwithstanding her smartness, and Laura a hardly perceptible figure, we have reached at least one strong, good character in George Warrington. In the elaborate and artistic study which followed "Pendennis," the whole scheme is changed, and the centre of the picture is occupied by a character, against which the keenest critic could find nothing to say, the really noble figure who dominates all the petty intriguers surrounding him by the force of his pure and lofty nature. Here Thackeray has set himself to elaborate something resembling Cromwell's "gentleman indeed," the most perfect type in art as well as in nature, the fitted centre of an exquisitely harmonized composition. But the result was in his own eyes not entirely satisfactory. Esmond, Thackeray himself said,—perhaps not without some hope of being contradicted,—was a prig ; and there is perhaps some truth in this self-criticism. In the "Newcomes," he, therefore, smoothed away whatever stiffness there might be in that lofty conception, purifying—and perhaps strengthening by a slight admixture of weakness—the nobler elements. The result was the perfectly beautiful figure of Thomas Newcome, a picture in which Thackeray has perhaps reached a higher level than any novelist but Sir Walter Scott. This is the climax beyond which it

Elaborate and artistic work on his characters.

was impossible for him to go. When he took up his pen again we seem to find some reflection of Esmond in the less elaborated figure of General Lambert in the "Virginians." There is a declension in the power of the picture, but the two characters are at heart much the same. We observe something of the same process in the faint echo of the matchless Parson Adams, which is produced in the Dr. Harrison of Fielding's last novel, "Amelia."

His cynical sketches always contain a redeeming point.

When we turn to the other characters in Thackeray's studies from contemporary life, we are still less inclined to admit the charge of cynicism which is often brought against him. If he sets himself to draw a blackguard he is too true an artist to omit the redeeming points that are to be found in almost every case. Rawdon Crawley, a stupid and rather brutal sharper, is softened by circumstances into something really fine; the contemptible hypocrite, Charles Honeyman, sends back the money which he had borrowed, to Colonel Newcome in his distress, and the good man breaks down over that one good episode in his many troubles. Even Amory, the reckless, shameless convict, has his good points. And with the doubtful characters—what Bacon would call the *instantiæ limitis*, those which hover on the boundary of good and bad—how admirably Thackeray can turn their good qualities towards us. Who does not feel a certain sympathy with the drunken, degraded Costigan, a kind of admiration for the scheming money-

lender, Sherrick? To complete this side of the picture we may quote one grand study of a thoughtless scamp redeemed and elevated as by "a sea-change into something rich and strange," by the contemplation of the goodness of another, in the person of Fred Bayham. For all those whom moralists would sweep aside as worthless Thackeray had the truly catholic sympathy of a man who has seen enough to find good in everything.

His catholic sympathy.

But for another class of evil he, in common with most great artists, had no mercy. In the "Newcomes" he distinctly states his intention of leaving the bad alone, poor fellows, and solely attacking the so-called good. The intense bitterness of the assault upon Mrs. Hobson Newcome and her set, the "worldly-holy," as Laurence Oliphant afterwards called them, is the outcome of the feeling that these are the people who think themselves and are thought to be better than others. The crusade against this kind of hypocrisy was what Thackeray really enjoyed. To satirize vice was not half so attractive to him. After the crash which is brought about by Rawdon Crawley's discovery of Becky and Lord Steyne, we seem to find a certain sympathy with all the wretched actors in the catastrophe. There is a little tribute to the personal courage of Lord Steyne; there is a certain amount of pity for the destruction of Becky's ambitious dreams. There has been punishment for wrong done, and that is enough; we must not hit a

Delighted in satirizing hypocrisy.

man when he is down. But what really brings gladness to the heart of the satirist is the fact that the day after the *esclandre* the Bishop of Ealing should have gone to write down his name in the visitor's book at Gaunt House.

It is true that Thackeray did not entirely escape the fate which seems to fall on every satirist, of being carried too far in his onslaught upon hypocrisy, and attacking some things which are in no way deserving of censure. His detestation of humbug was so intense that he seems to forget that there is some of it which we could scarcely do without. Indeed, were all descriptions of humbug to be swept off the face of the earth at once, the very best Christians would be at each other's throats in half an hour. He blamed the writers of the day for being too mealy-mouthed in their descriptions of character. "Since the author of *Tom Jones* was buried, no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a *Man.*" We do not know whether Thackeray had temporarily forgotten that it pleased Fielding to put his hero, in an episode of which Colonel Newcome afterwards spoke with just severity, into a position so disgraceful, that no subsequent writer, to our knowledge, has ventured to reproduce it until M. Octave Mirabeau produced a still more repulsive picture in his extremely powerful and intensely disagreeable novel, "*Le Calvaire.*" Thackeray himself did not venture to go so far into the life

Detestation of humbug.

Octave Mirabeau's "*Le Calvaire.*"

of his man, but only set himself to lop off all possible heroic attributes. Indeed Pendennis, who was to be the real Man without any unnatural decoration, is in reality a very innocent person with plenty of faults, no doubt, but these chiefly of the kind that arise from weakness of character. We are not, indeed, sure that Thackeray's philosophy might not be reduced to a belief that feebleness is the distinguishing characteristic of the male of the human species; but this is not an original view, especially when the central figure of a book, ordinarily distinguished as the hero, is chiefly marked by the peculiar instability which distinguishes him from the stronger figures around him. If Pendennis is the natural man, to what class does George Warrington or Captain Strong belong? or even Major Pendennis, all of whom have at least sufficient strength and individuality to follow out their own objects as seems good in their eyes? Why should we see anything more characteristic of the real man in the wavering figure to which our attention is chiefly directed?

Pendennis illustrative of the real Man.

However, Thackeray's desire to represent an unvarnished picture of man as he really is, did not prevent him, as we have already seen, from giving to his next work a central figure which does not fall below the heroic level. Henry Esmond, with all his virtues, is quite as real as Arthur Pendennis. We will not, however, add to what we have already said about this noble figure, save as the centre of a

Henry Esmond and Arthur Pendennis.

"Esmond" a work of art—almost without a flaw.

very wonderful production. "Esmond" is beyond doubt the first of Thackeray's novels as a work of art. There is something in the exquisite finish and harmony of this which we can only express by the epithet, artistic; it is a pure combination of perfect taste and perfect workmanship, which puts it in a separate class, in which many of the greatest literary works have no claim to rank. The genuine literary artist is not common; Balzac might be cited as a specimen, and George Eliot, in her early works, and perhaps, without going quite so high, we might say that we have at present an artist of high excellence in Mr. R. L. Stevenson. As a composition "Esmond" is almost without a flaw. The details of the execution are all worked out in the same masterly manner, and the language is perfect. We may take, as one instance of the exquisite finish of the minor points, the little explanation of Esmond's prejudice against Marlborough. He is, of course, a man with views of his own concerning his contemporaries, whom he judges according to the light in which they present themselves to him; and, as it happens, he is the opponent of the great general and a merciless critic of his conduct. This is natural enough, but there is a yet further light of reality communicated by the revelation in the foot-note added by Esmond's daughter, which tells us how Marlborough had spoken of him as having "the hang-dog look of his rogue of a father." Esmond himself did not know that this

The genuine literary artist is not common.

Balzac.

George Eliot.

R. L. Stevenson.

An illustration of its exquisite finish.

was the origin of his prejudice, and that these few words, which he had possibly forgotten, had an influence on his whole life. It is like some of the stray touches in Shakespeare, where Stephano wonders how Caliban came to speak his language, or Sir Toby prays that "the spirit of humours intimate reading aloud" to Malvolio,—mere by-strokes of the pencil, which a less perfect workman would have utterly neglected, but which have a wonderful effect in realising the scene in the minds of both author and spectator.

Thackeray's Christmas Books.

Like Dickens, Thackeray wrote Christmas books, the best known of which is the extraordinarily light and playful extravaganza of the "Rose and the Ring," a story intended for children, but most thoroughly enjoyed by such children as are grown up. We consider the "Rose and the Ring," indeed, as almost one of his great works. It is so absolutely the best thing of its kind, full of such genial humour and such splendid absurdity, carried on just to the proper limit, and never allowed to run over into buffoonery. Thackeray had a great turn for this kind of writing, and his burlesques are probably as popular as any of his works. We do not always admire these last. "Rebecca and Rowena" is very funny, but we cannot get rid of a regret that the writer did not choose some other subject to make merry upon; while the extravagance of the "Legend of the Rhine" seems to us rather wearisome. Another branch

"The Rose and the Ring."

"Rebecca and Rowena."

"Legend of the Rhine."

of Thackeray's work was his lectures, in which he achieved a great success. His first course of lectures in 1851 was concerned with the "English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century," including Swift, Addison, Steele, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and others; a valuable series of extremely lively and entertaining pictures, mingled with acute, but often partial, criticism. The success of these, both in England and America, was so great that another course was prepared upon the "Four Georges," which is chiefly remarkable for the famous attack on George IV. Among his other minor works were "Lovel the Widower" and the "Adventures of Philip," both of which appeared in the "Cornhill Magazine," of which he was appointed the first editor in 1859. At his death, in 1863, he left an unfinished historical story entitled "Denis Duval."

His first course of lectures—"English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century."

"The Four Georges."

"Lovel the Widower."

"Adventures of Philip."

"Cornhill Magazine."

"Denis Duval."

Though literature was, no doubt, the only department in which he was sure of success, Thackeray had harboured other aims at different times. For some time he had hopes of some post under the Government through the kind offices of his friend Lord Clanricarde; among others of a secretaryship of legation at Washington; which Lord Clarendon was obliged to refuse him for two reasons. The first, which was that the appointment had already been made, was sufficient for Thackeray. He also stood for Parliament for the borough of Oxford in 1857 and was defeated by a small majority by Mr. (afterwards

Other aims.

Lord) Cardwell, a result on which all parties were to be congratulated. Since his death his daughter, Mrs. Richmond Ritchie, of whose own works we shall have to speak later, has given the world a collection of the scraps he had left behind him, chiefly drawings, with the delightful burlesque tale of the "Orphan of Pimlico;" and a charming series of letters to his friend Mrs. Brookfield has also appeared. We have not spoken of Thackeray's ballads, clever as they are, for we do not think that they entitle him to rank as a poet; but there is among these letters one touching piece of verse, which with its forced gaiety and undertone of exquisite sadness, seems to enchain the memory. The printer's devil from "Punch" is waiting outside the door for copy, as the writer throws off this little call for the sympathy of the kind friends whose society is among his greatest consolations:

Mrs. Richmond Ritchie.

"Orphan of Pimlico."

His Ballads.

"A lonely man am I through life; my business 'tis to joke and jeer—
A lonely man without a wife; God took from me a lady dear."

For the private life of Thackeray was overshadowed by one of the most terrible sorrows with which God allows man to be afflicted.

We do not find among the older writers of fiction in our day anyone who comes up to the level of the great novelists of whom we have just been speaking, but no period has produced so many of more than

Writers of fiction of the commencement of the era.

average talent in this department of literature. At the commencement of our period we find among the leading names, three young writers of the same age whose work had already attracted the attention of the public : Edward Lytton Bulwer, William Harrison Ainsworth, and Benjamin Disraeli. The first and greatest of these in the field of literature was born in 1805 of good family on both sides of the house, his mother being an heiress of the ancient house of Lytton of Knebworth in Hertfordshire, whose name the novelist subsequently assumed on succeeding to their estates. In early youth he began to write poetry and even to publish it from the age of fifteen onwards. Little, however, was ever heard of his "Weeds and Wild Flowers" or "O'Neill the Rebel," the author himself positively ignoring their existence in later days. At the age of twenty-two he attempted a novel in the German style called "Falkland," which was immediately followed by the really remarkable "Pelham." Few books contain more absurdity or more affectation than "Pelham;" yet it was at once evident that it could only be the production of a writer of more than ordinary talents. For so young an author it was certainly a wonderful effort, showing considerable originality of thought, some humour, and a remarkable power of narrative, specially evinced in the sensational scenes of the end. The talent thus displayed was not allowed to slumber, but kept in perpetual activity for the rest of his life.

Edward Lytton Bulwer, 1805–82.

"Falkland."

"Pelham."

In his early career, however, Bulwer seemed to be constantly changing his style and venturing upon some new branch of fiction, as if doubtful in which he would finally excel ; indeed he did not strike the richest vein of all till comparatively late in life. "Pelham" was followed by two novels of considerable merit, "The Disowned" and "Devereux," after which the author made a regrettable excursion into the realms of sentimental crime with "Paul Clifford" and "Eugene Aram." We think, however, that Bulwer has received more than his fair share of obloquy as one of those who represented crime in an attractive light. We cannot imagine Paul Clifford exciting any other sentiment than that of weariness, while as for the other, it should be remembered that it is still extremely doubtful whether Eugene Aram was really guilty of the murder for which he was executed, and that Bulwer went distinctly on the ground that he was only a more or less accidental spectator of the crime.

"The Disowned."
"Devereux."
"Paul Clifford."
"Eugene Aram."

A more successful attempt in a fresh direction was made in the "Last Days of Pompeii," a picture of ancient times reconstructed with much skill, which was followed by the interesting historical romance of "Rienzi." By these works, in which—with many objectionable mannerisms and a superabundance of high-flown sentiment impressed upon the reader's mind by the lavish use of capital letters—there was much to praise, Bulwer had made himself a consider-

"Last Days of Pompeii."
"Rienzi."

able reputation in literature at the commencement of the reign. He had succeeded Campbell in the editorship of the "New Monthly Magazine," and even planned a periodical of his own, the "Monthly Chronicle," which, however, was not a success. He had also been for some years a not undistinguished member of Parliament. He now turned his thoughts to dramatic writing, in which he had already made an unsuccessful attempt. The "Lady of Lyons," first produced in 1838, was received with favour and is still popular, and the same may be said for the slightly less successful plays of "Richelieu" and "Money." In the department of fiction, "Night and Morning" at least maintained his early reputation; "Zanoni" opened a new field of research into the supernatural, while the "Last of the Barons" and "Harold" showed that he had lost none of his power as a writer of historical fiction. In poetry he was less successful, his epic, "King Arthur," being a complete failure.

Editor of the "New Monthly Magazine."

"The Lady of Lyons."

"Richelieu."

"Zanoni."

"Last of the Barons."

"Harold."

"King Arthur."

It was not, however, till more than twenty years after the publication of "Pelham" that his greatest period as a novelist began. "The Caxtons," published anonymously in "Blackwood's Magazine" in 1848, came to the public as a revelation of a new style much simpler and more powerful than anything he had done before. This was followed by "My Novel," a work which commences as a perfect idyl of country life, but wanders off later into complicated

"The Caxtons."

"My Novel."

intrigues and melodramatic episodes in an unreal world peopled with impossible characters like Randal Leslie or Harley Lestrange. As long as we remain in the village of Hazledean with the Squire and the Parson, Dr. Riccabocca and Lenny Fairfield, we desire no wider horizon and no better company, and we think it most unfortunate that the writer was not of the same mind. Something of the same criticism might be applied to his next novel, "What Will He Do With It?" which commences charmingly with the adventures of Waife, but goes off again into melodrama interspersed with high-flown sentiment and sown thickly with quotations from Horace. There is much more sustained excellence in "The Caxtons," which practically retains its original simplicity throughout the three volumes. Austin and Roland Caxton are never thrust aside to make play for melodramatic schemers or conventional heroes, and the atmosphere in which they live is equally healthy from first to last. With these three novels, which rank so very much higher than any of his other works, the author's literary career came more or less to a standstill, though he continued writing up to his death in 1873. The "Strange Story," published in "All the Year Round" in 1862—was a continuation of the train of thought started in "Zanoni," which had considerable merit. The same love of the supernatural was shown in his admirable short story of the "Haunters and the Haunted," which originally

"What Will He Do With It?"

"A Strange Story."

"Haunters and the Haunted."

"The Coming Race." "The Parisians." "Kenelm Chillingley."

appeared in "Blackwood." The novels of his later days, the "Coming Race," "The Parisians" and "Kenelm Chillingley," did little to increase his reputation. Bulwer Lytton—as he was called in later days—devoted much attention to politics and was Colonial Secretary under Lord Derby in 1858-9. He was made a baronet in 1838, and in 1866 was raised to the peerage by the title of Baron Lytton.

Raised to the peerage, 1886.

William Harrison Ainsworth, 1805-53.

Equally fertile in production, but by no means comparable to Bulwer in ability, William Harrison Ainsworth has chiefly gained notice as a writer of historical novels. Born in Manchester in 1805, he was in early life articled to a solicitor, but failed to find a congenial pursuit in the law. In 1826 he published his first novel "Sir John Chiverton," of which, however, he appears not to have been the sole author. In the same year he married the daughter of his publisher, John Ebers, and made a venture in the same line of business as his father-in-law, but soon abandoned this and returned to literature. In 1834 he made his first success with the novel of "Rookwood," in which the praises of Dick Turpin, the highwayman, are sung with an ardour worthy of a better cause. It sprang at once into a popularity which was perhaps above its merits; it had, however, the advantage of being condemned by moralists as tending to the encouragement of vice. We are not tempted to join in the chorus of admiration, but will admit that there is some power in the de-

"Sir John Chiverton."

"Rookwood."

scription of the famous ride to York. A few years later, Ainsworth returned to the safer path of historical romance with the somewhat tedious novel of "Crichton," but in 1839 again shocked the world with the history of "Jack Sheppard," a work much inferior to "Rookwood" in literary merit. "Jack Sheppard" appeared in "Bentley's Miscellany," to the editorship of which Ainsworth succeeded on the retirement of Dickens, retaining it till 1841, when he set up a magazine under his own name. On the failure of this enterprise, to which he contributed some of his novels, he purchased the "New Monthly Magazine," which he conducted for many years. We have no space to speak at length of his numerous historical novels. They are for the most part built on the foundation of G. P. R. James, and, if less wordy, are not very much more exciting; the characters are usually too conscious of their responsibility to history to venture to throw much reality into their words or deeds. Among the most popular were the "Tower of London" (1840), "Old St. Paul's" (1841), "Windsor Castle" (1843), the "Lancashire Witches" (1848), the "Flitch of Bacon" (1854), and "Boscobel" (1872). Ainsworth continued to write novels up to the end of his life, his last publication being "Stanley Brereton," which appeared in 1882. He died in the following year.

"Crichton."

"Jack Sheppard."

"Tower of London."

"Old St. Paul's."

"Windsor Castle," etc

The third of the three novelists whom we have grouped together for chronological reasons chiefly,

Benjamin Disraeli, born 1804, died Earl of Beaconsfield, 1881.

belonged to a very different kind. Benjamin Disraeli was a writer of his own class alone. His literary career was almost as singular as was the far more important figure which he made in politics. Born in the end of 1804, and, like Ainsworth, receiving his first training as a solicitor's clerk, he made his first appearance in literature in 1826 as the author of a satirical poem called the "Dunciad of To-day." This was followed almost immediately by the curious and startling novel of "Vivian Grey," the first of those extraordinary literary fireworks in which, as also in political pyrotechny, Disraeli was a born adept. The public gasped and wondered, doubtful what manner of thing this might be that was presented to them, and then paid the necessary tribute of admiration to the brilliancy of an exhibition which they found much difficulty in estimating at its proper value. "Vivian Grey" was quickly followed by a number of other novels, "Captain Popanilla," the "Young Duke," "Contarini Fleming," the extraordinary gibberish of "Alroy," and the more ordinary and pleasant love-tales of "Venetia" and "Henrietta Temple." By the commencement of the reign Disraeli had secured a seat in Parliament, after veering round to every point of the political compass as occasion served. He came out as a candidate under the wing of O'Connell at Wycombe in 1832, and was returned for Maidstone in 1837 as the uncompromising opponent of his early protector.

"The Dunciad of To-day."

"Vivian Grey."

Literary fireworks.

"Captain Popanilla."

"Young Duke."

"Contarini Fleming."

"Venetia."

"Henrietta Temple."

Disraeli was, indeed, throughout life a man who fought for his own hand under various banners; but with his political career we have nothing to do, except in so far as it influenced his writings. In 1844 he published his most successful novel, "Coningsby," a work which we now find somewhat fatiguing to read from its high-flown style and stilted characters, but which gained a great reputation in its day, and is certainly not without some signs of literary genius. It served the treble purpose of laying the political views of what was then called the "Young England" party before the public, paying a really fine tribute to the character of the great Jewish race to which the author belonged, through the fine but impossible person of Sidonia, and satirizing many living persons, whom it was this writer's lamentable practice to introduce into his novels under such thin disguises that the public could not fail to penetrate them. The next year saw the production of the almost equally remarkable novel of "Sybil," which was also much concerned with contemporary politics; and three years later came "Tancred," a book chiefly remarkable for its powerful delineation of the characteristics of the Arabian race, and also for the foreshadowing of the Eastern policy which Disraeli lived to carry out in some measure many years later. After "Tancred" came a lull, Disraeli being too much occupied with his political duties—as he was now recognized as

"Coningsby," 1844.

The Young England Party.

"Sybil," 1845.

"Tancred," 1847.

the leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons—for writing of any kind. In 1870 he came again before the literary world with another of the startling productions which had made a name for him in early life. It was difficult to tell what "Lothair" was intended for, whether it might not perhaps be a sort of gigantic joke, intended to see how much the British public were prepared to take in. "Endymion," published ten years later, was more human and natural, though still dealing with fine company and social splendours of the most dazzling kind. This was the last work of the great politician, who brought to an end in 1881 such an extraordinary career as has rarely been known in the history of England.

"Lothair," 1870.

"Endymion," 1880.

Among minor novelists at the commencement of the reign some special notice is due to Samuel Warren (1807–77), a lawyer of some eminence, who had begun by studying medicine, and whose "Diary of a Late Physician," published in "Blackwood's Magazine" (1838–40), attracted a good deal of attention. In 1841 followed his principal novel, "Ten Thousand a Year," which shows considerable power of comic, or rather grotesque, picturing, and might take a high rank in fiction but for the terribly virtuous and high-flown characters which were apparently the pride of the author's heart. Aubrey, his favourite hero, was chosen by Thackeray as an excellent example of several branches of snobbishness. Warren also

Samuel Warren, 1807–77.

"Diary of a Late Physician."

"Ten Thousand a Year."

wrote another novel, "Now and Then," and a number of legal books, and was a frequent contributor to "Blackwood." "Now and Then."

Another officer in the army of "Blackwood," Captain Thomas Hamilton, younger brother of Sir William Hamilton, was best known by his lively novel, "Cyril Thornton," and wrote little of importance in the present reign. Captain Thomas Hamilton. "Cyril Thornton."

James Morier (1780–1848), who was at one time the British representative at the court of Teheran, was best known as the writer of the "Adventures of Hajji Baba in Ispahan" (1824), and "Hajji Baba in England," (1828). His contributions to the literature of the present reign, including "Abel Allnutt" (1839) and "The Mirza" (1841) were less successful. Robert Bell (1800–1867), a journalist of Irish extraction, contributed two novels to the literature of the Victorian era, "Hearts and Altars" (1852), and the "Ladder of Gold" (1856). He was also the author of some successful comedies, contributed some good historical work to Lardner's "Cabinet Cyclopædia," and edited a valuable edition of the English poets, which unfortunately was never finished. James Morier, 1780–1848. "Hajji Baba." "Abel Allnutt." "The Mirza." Robert Bell, 1800–67. "Hearts and Altars." "Ladder of Gold."

A more striking figure is that of Captain Marryat, whose delightful books of adventure have been the treasure of many generations of boys, few of whom have renounced their allegiance to him even after they have begun to take an interest in less exciting Captain Marryat, 1762–1848.

Personal achievements.

literature. Frederick Marryat was born in 1792 and, entering the navy at an early age, achieved great distinction in that service. Besides these achievements in the ordinary course of his duty, Marryat showed great personal courage in saving many lives from drowning, for which he received the medal of the Royal Humane Society. He was also the inventor of the code of signals used in the merchant services throughout the civilized world, and was thanked by the House of Commons for this valuable invention. His chief services to his country, however, have been through his literary works, which are full of the liveliest patriotism and devotion to the commonweal. It was not till 1830 that he published his first novel of "Frank Mildmay," which, we must admit, is not among his best. Four years later came his most successful book, "Peter Simple," a combination of exciting adventure and homely humour, which seems to us unsurpassed in its kind. To this succeeded many others, generally of the same description, among which we should particularly select "Jacob Faithful" and "Midshipman Easy," as the two best examples of his peculiar style. None of the subsequent books, however, appears to us to come near to "Peter Simple." He died in 1848. His daughter, Miss Florence Marryat, has also gained herself a certain place among English novelists.

"Frank Mildmay."

"Peter Simple."

"Jacob Faithful." "Midshipman Easy."

Florence Marryat—now Mrs. Francis Lean.

As Captain Marryat is the chronicler *par excellence*

of naval exploits, we must mention in connection with him some of those writers of fiction who devoted themselves to military adventure. A contemporary of Marryat's to whom this latter subject naturally offered itself was the Rev. George Robert Gleig (1796-1888), chaplain-general to the forces, who in his youth had served in the army throughout the Peninsular and Waterloo campaigns, and was only ordained after his retirement from the service in 1820. His principal work, the "Subaltern," was published in "Blackwood" in 1826, and was succeeded by other stories, "Allan Breck," the "Chronicles of Waltham," the "Only Daughter," the "Light Dragoon," and many valuable works on military history. Another writer who may more properly be compared with Marryat, though belonging to a later generation, was Charles Lever, so well known for his spirited tales and romances of Irish life. Born in 1806, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin, Lever took up medicine as a profession, doing specially good service during the outbreak of cholera in Ireland in 1832. He afterwards practised in Brussels, where perhaps the vicinity of Waterloo exercised some influence over his mind; at least the idea of his military novels seems first to have occurred to him here. The first of these was the "Confessions of Harry Lorrequer," which is little more than a collection of extremely amusing stories. "Charles O'Malley," published a year or two later,

Rev. George Robert Gleig 1796–1888.

"The Subaltern."

"Allan Breck."

"Chronicles of Waltham"

"Only Daughter."

"Light Dragoon."

Charles Lever, 1806–72.

"Confessions of Harry Lorrequer."

"Charles O'Malley."

was more deliberately planned and more elaborately carried out, a fascinating mixture of adventure and fun, which established the claims of Lever to a place in literature on a firm footing. Among his subsequent books, those which treat of military life or of Irish peculiarities are the most successful, among which we may perhaps select "Jack Hinton" and "Tom Burke," the story of an Irish soldier in the service of Napoleon. The latter part of his life Lever spent chiefly on the continent as a consul at Spezia, Trieste, etc., and his later works were more elaborate, full of diplomacy and intrigue, full, too, of the speculations and devices of that special figure, the Irishman abroad, but failing considerably in the racy wit and fun of his earlier works. His plots become too intricate, and the various threads of his story so irretrievably mixed that the author himself often seemed to forget what his original intention had been, and merely sought the quickest way out of the labyrinth in which he had involved himself. The end of his life was enlivened by the success of a series of papers on things in general and continental politics in particular, which he contributed to Blackwood, under *nom de plume* of cornelius O'Dowd. Lever died in 1872.

"Jack Hinton." "Tom Burke."

H. M. consul at Trieste

"Cornelius O'Dowd" papers.

As an exponent of Irish humour, Lever naturally recalls to us the many talented writers of the same nationality who were prominent about the beginning of our period. Gerald Griffin (1803-1840), the author

Gerald Griffin, 1803–40.

of "The Collegians," had practically ceased writing by the commencement of the reign and retired into a monastery in 1838. The Banim brothers, joint authors of the well-known "O'Hara Tales," who were both older than Griffin, lived to collaborate in one more work, "Father O'Connell," published in 1840, which was perhaps one of their best productions. John Banim, the younger brother, was already attacked by the disease to which he succumbed two years later, and his part in the last work was probably small. Michael, however, continued to write, though his time was greatly taken up by the duties of a small post granted to him by the Government. His last novel, the "Town of the Cascades," published in 1864, was not unworthy of his best days. Michael Banim died in 1873. William Hamilton Maxwell (1794-1850), an Irish clergyman with a living in Connaught, is also included in our period, though his best-known work, the "Stories of Waterloo," is of earlier date. A more enduring reputation was earned by William Carleton (1794-1869), whose charming "Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry" did perhaps more to acquaint the English public with the real nature and characteristics of his people than any of the writers we have already mentioned. His contributions to Victorian literature include "Fardorougha the Miser" (1839), the alternately humorous and melancholy "Misfortunes of Barney Branagan" (1841), and his most

"The Collegians."

John and Michael Banim.

"O'Hara Tales."

"Father O'Connell."

"The Town of the Cascades."

William Hamilton Maxwell, 1794–1850.

"Stories of Waterloo."

William Carleton, 1794–1869.

"Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry."

"Fardorougha the Miser."

"Barney Branagan."

"Valentine McClutchey."

elaborate work, "Valentine McClutchy, the Irish Agent." Carleton continued to write busily up to his death in 1869. Few of the distinctively Irish authors we have mentioned are better known than Samuel Lover (1797-1868). Lover, who was originally a miniature painter by profession,—in which capacity he is remembered by his portrait of Paganini,—did not begin his literary career till tolerably late in life, his first production being the "Legends and Stories illustrative of Irish Character," which was succeeded by other works of a similar kind. In 1837 appeared his first novel, "Rory O'More," a spirited story of the Irish Rebellion, and in 1842–43 a series of extremely comic scenes in a kind of novel form published in "Bentley's Miscellany," under the title of "Handy Andy." Lover also wrote Irish songs, set them to music and sang them himself after the fashion of, though much inferior to the poet Moore. According to the spirit of the day, he also gave entertainments, which he called "Irish Evenings," consisting of his own sketches of Irish manners, stories, and songs.

Samuel Lover, 1797–1868.

His portrait of Paganini.

"Legends and Stories.'

"Rory O'More."

"Handy Andy."

His Songs.

A much more remarkable figure, whose appearance upon the field of fiction was of somewhat later date, took at once a conspicuous place among English novelists. Charles Kingsley was born in Devonshire, in 1819, of an ancient Cheshire family, and educated partly in private, by Derwent Coleridge, and partly at King's College School, from which

Charles Kingsley, 1819–75.

he went to Magdalen College, Cambridge, where he greatly distinguished himself, both in classics and mathematics. On leaving the University he took orders and was appointed to the curacy of Eversley, in Hampshire, of which he became rector in 1844. In this country parish he remained to his death, receiving some preferment in the Church as Canon of Chester (1869) and of Westminster (1873). He was also for ten years Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, and held other more or less honorary appointments consistent with his position. His first literary attempt had been in the way of dramatic poetry, with the "Saint's Tragedy," founded upon the story of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. This poem, which has received a measure of praise perhaps superior to its merits, was an achievement not unfitted to the clerical career of its author, and might not in itself have extended his fame much beyond the limits of ecclesiastical and scholarly circles; but events soon happened which brought the writer more clearly before the general world. In the great upheavings of 1848, when some men thought that the worst days of the French Revolution were returning, and others looked to a brief convulsion preceding the general establishment of peace on earth and goodwill towards men, Kingsley was one of the observers who believed that so great and general a movement must be productive of good if it were only directed to a really good object, and not to some impossible

Distinguished university career.

Rector of Eversley, 1844.

Canon of Chester, 1869; of Westminster 1873.

Professor of Modern History, Cambridge.

"The Saint's Tragedy."

The French Revolution of 1848 and the Chartist movement in England.

Unites with F. D. Maurice in schemes and aspirations for the working classes.

ideal, the realization of which would not even be desirable if it could be attained. Plunging with his leader, Frederick Denison Maurice, into the social questions of the day, Kingsley aimed, as did the school which he followed, at introducing a Christian leaven into the half-formed and undigested schemes and aspirations of the working classes. His sympathy with the wants which have inspired many an ill-advised and ill-directed movement brought some measure of obloquy upon him, and he was for some time known by the nickname of the "Chartist parson." What his views and hopes really were he tried to lay before the public in his remarkable novel of "Alton Locke," published in 1849. In this supposed autobiography of a young, self-educated poet, a tailor by trade, Kingsley endeavoured with considerable power to throw himself into the position of his hero, to realize the aims and hopes of the man who feels his position to be an unjust and unnecessary drag upon his efforts to rise, and even the prejudice and ignorance which affect his views of the society above him, though circumstances have given him a somewhat clearer insight than his fellows. In Alton Locke himself, in the queer, old misanthrope who is his instructor in life, in the fiery Chartist who is his chosen friend, the author not only introduced some original ideas and political doctrine very novel to the circles of which he himself was a member, but attained a high literary success. "Yeast," a slighter

"Alton Locke," 1849.

"Yeast."

attempt on much the same lines, published shortly afterwards, was full, as its name indicates, of new leaven which was supposed to be working under the surface of society, and raised the gamekeeper Tregartha into the position previously occupied by the hero of a higher class; but though in many ways powerful as a study it was too little real to produce any permanent impression.

Four years later, in 1853, Kingsley attempted a new departure with "Hypatia," a story treating of the life of ancient Alexandria. The power with which the author managed to reproduce the scenes of a past so entirely perished, is very remarkable in this novel; the more dramatic incidents are related with great spirit, and some of the characters, such as that of St. Cyril himself, are brought very distinctly before our eyes. The defect in this case, as in a lesser degree with "Alton Locke," is the extreme length of the book, which is chiefly due to the lengthened philosophical discussions which retard the action and break the continuity of the composition. This is too common a fault in our own day, but a fault it remains for a writer of fiction. A more thoroughly successful effort as a novel was "Westward Ho!" published in 1855, a story of adventure in the Elizabethan buccaneering days. It is perhaps not the noblest form of enterprise to make the object of hero-worship, but the reader of Kingsley's novel is apt to forget whether the exploits of Amyas Leigh

"Hypatia," 1853.

"Westward Ho!" 1855

are in perfect accordance with the principles of abstract justice. Among Kingsley's other works were "Two Years Ago," a novel (1857), "Hereward, the Wake," a historical tale (1866), the "Heroes" (1856), a delightful revival of some legends of ancient Greece, the "Water Babies," a fairy tale (1863), and "Glaucus," a pleasant essay in natural history, published in 1857. Charles Kingsley died in 1875.

"Two Years Ago," 1857.
"Hereward the Wake."
"The Heroes," 1856.
"The Water Babies," 1863.
"Glaucus," 1857.

His younger brother, Henry, was also a writer of considerable power. Born in 1830, so many years younger than Charles that he almost belonged to a different generation, Henry made his reputation by novels of a different cast, in which country life and sport are among the favourite themes. "Ravenshoe," his most successful work, published in 1861, has more of plot and more studied delineation of character than is found in the majority of his books; the well-known incident of the rough and rather brutal Welter's hesitation between right and wrong, when he is called upon to do his duty at the cost of a fortune to himself, shows a latent power which might have raised him to a very high place in literature. Most of his novels, however, are cast in a slighter mould. "Mademoiselle Mathilde," a story of the French Revolution, may be mentioned as one of the best. Henry Kingsley also contributed much to periodical literature, and was for a considerable time editor of the Edinburgh "Daily Review," in whose service he went out to the Franco-German war as

Henry Kingsley, 1830–76.
"Ravenshoe." 1861.
"Mademoiselle Mathilde."
Editor of the Edinburgh "Daily Review."

his own war correspondent. He died at an early age in 1876. Another writer whose novels are chiefly occupied with field sports and adventure—which is the more remarkable that the author himself was a cripple all his life—was Francis Edward Smedley (1818–64). His books of which "Frank Fairlegh," "Lewis Arundel," and "Harry Coverdale" are the most popular, contain a combination of exciting adventure and good, honest fun, and are written in a thoroughly healthy tone.

Francis Edward Smedley" 1818–64; "Frank Fairlegh." "Lewis Arundel." "Harry Coverdale."

The period of which we are writing was not so full of writers of fiction as the present time. It was still thought possible that artists, men of science, lawyers, doctors, soldiers, sailors, and men and women of leisure might preserve their natural position in society without having written a novel. The numbers, however, were even then sufficiently large, and we cannot be expected to enter upon a record of all the rank and file of this noble army. Among the better known writers was Col. Meadows Taylor, (1808–76), a distinguished Indian officer, and author of some remarkable novels dealing with scenes of Indian life, past and present. Among the most successful were the "Confessions of a Thug," imparting to the public something of his peculiar knowledge of that wild sect which he had done so much to exterminate, "Tara," a historical tale, dealing with the commencement of the Mussulman and Mahratta wars in the sixteenth century, and "Seeta,"

Colonel Meadows Taylor, 1808–76.

"Confessions of a Thug."

"Tara."

"Seeta."

a story of the Mutiny. Among the better known writers who hardly reached the front rank, we may mention James Hannay (1827–73), a naval officer in early life and afterwards a journalist of considerable eminence, for some years editor of the "Edinburgh Courant," will chiefly be remembered by two spirited novels, of which the incidents were taken from naval life, "Singleton Fontenoy" and "Eustace Conyers." His lectures on "Satire and Satirists" and essays contributed to the "Quarterly Review" and afterwards republished in a volume, also show much ability. A journalist of less note, Angus Bethune Reach (1822–1856), was also the author of several novels, of which "Clement Lorimer" received some praise; of some French sketches published under the name of "Claret and Olives," and a rather amusing "Natural History of Bores," which had some success in its day. Among other novel-writers we find many names which are better known in other connections. Albert Smith (1816–1890), who achieved a kind of immortality for himself by his clever entertainments, in which departments he perhaps never met his match, would scarcely have been remembered as the author of the "Adventures of Mr. Ledbury," the "Marchioness of Brinvilliers" and other ephemeral stories. Of Douglas Jerrold, Charles Shirley Brooks, author of the "Silver Cord," and other writers of a similar class we shall

James Hannay, 1827–73.

Editor of the Edinburgh "Courant."

"Singleton Fontenoy."

"Eustace Conyers."

"Satire and Satirists."

Bethune Reach, 1822–56.

"Clement Lorimer."

"Claret and Olives."

"Natural History of Bores."

Albert Smith, 1816–90.

Adventures of Mr Ledbury.

"The Marchioness Brinvilliers."

have to speak in a later chapter, as the first leaders in the great enterprise of "Punch."

Mrs. Gore.

Of Mrs. Gore, though an exceedingly voluminous writer of fiction, there is not much to say. She still continued to write during the earlier portion of the Victorian period, but her style and manner were essentially of the past. The fashionable novel, as she understood and executed it, was of Almacks and that transition period between the wild days of the Regency and the new-born decorum of the young Queen's purified court. The thing exists still, and it is very likely that the older versions would contrast favourably with that existing in the present day; but it is at least so different as to show how much more antiquated is an old fashion than the oldest nature can ever be.

Mrs. Marsh.

Mrs. Marsh, long known as the author of "Emilia Wyndham," has something of the same kind of old-fashioned air, but not in the same way. Hers was the novel of sentiment which is indeed never out of date, yet changes its modes almost as much as the other. Sweet and gentle heroines with long ringlets falling gracefully from drooping heads, in the simplicity of white muslin and sandalled shoes, young men who were the model of every domestic virtue, and an elegant home and hearth, which was sometimes swept by misfortune, but always lighted up by feminine guilelessness and grace, were her subjects. There were villains, too, as was necessary, but villains of the

most artless kind, and always delightfully distinct, so that the most careless reader might make no mistake on the subject. These two ladies were the last of their respective kind, for the time. The atmosphere was about to be stirred by a new and startling claimant of the highest honours in fiction, of a kind so new and rebellious to all the ancient traditions as to frighten the public for the first moment almost as much as she charmed it.

Rev. Patrick Brontë.

It would be unnecessary and out of place here to enter into the curious story of the three daughters of the country parson on the Yorkshire moors, whose little chronicle has been repeated over and over again until we know it by heart, with many attempts to make the circumstances account for the very exceptional character of these three remarkable women of genius. As a matter of fact many women of original character and individuality have been born and trained in a lonely country parish without eating their hearts out, as the Brontës did with cravings for advantages beyond their reach, or rebelling as they did against the bonds of poverty and solitude. It was they who were so greatly out of the common, and not their circumstances. The younger of the three, Anne (1819-1849), need scarcely have been mentioned, except for her relationship to the other two, whose vehemence and strong impulses carried her along with them even into literature, but in a gentler way. Without them she might have been a

His three daughters.

Anne Brontë, 1819-49.

Charlotte Brontë ("Currer Bell").

writer of gentle poesies, perhaps the teller of a domestic tale; but not more. Emily Brontë, the second sister (1818-1848), a person of so much character and force that her personality was almost violent, wrote one wild story, "Wuthering Heights," full of fierce life and tragedy, and the breath of moorland winds and storms, and several short poems of a remarkable character, died, having fought out her short life, beating her wings like an imprisoned bird against the bars of her cage.

Emily Brontë, 1818–48.

Charlotte Brontë, the elder sister of the three (1816-1855), lived long and attained a sudden and extraordinary fame, making a kind of revolution in fiction, influencing the entire generation, at least of female writers, after her. It is not too much to say of "Jane Eyre," her first novel, published in 1847, that it took the world by storm. Published anonymously, or, what is nearly the same thing, under the fictitious name of Currer Bell, it was for a short time unnoticed by the critics; but having accidentally fallen under the notice of one who had the discrimination to perceive the unusual power of the new author, was suddenly caught up by the public, which only wanted that spark to set it on flame. "Jane Eyre" was professedly the story of a little governess, an orphan girl, without beauty or pretension, educated in a school of genteel charity, of which the most bold and realistic picture was given, with that disregard of all polite fiction and charitable interpretation

Charlotte Brontë—"Currer Bell,"—1816–55.

"Jane Eyre." Its great success.

which is familiar nowadays, but which was quite novel to a more smooth-spoken time. This girl, the little rebel of Lowood, grows into a woman full of quaint attraction, and by accident enters as strange a household as ever figured in fiction, the master of which, Edward Rochester, a man who has exhausted all the excitements of the world, finds something piquant to replace them in the struggles of this little brilliant, intelligent, plain girl to escape his love and himself. Rochester was a new type among the heroes of fiction, a woman's hero, yet altogether different from the faultless, deferential and adoring paladin who had previously occupied the chief place among these creations. A domineering master, sometimes almost brutal, sometimes indulgent, but always the sovereign and tyrant for whom, according to this theory, the true woman pined, desiring to be commanded and taken possession of. He introduced a complete revolution into that large part of the realm of fiction in which the feminine imagination is supreme. The vivid individuality of the new writer, the conviction which she had the power of conveying into the reader's mind that the story she was telling was as true in its after course as in those beginning chapters, which was evidently taken from the life, produced a universal impression which scarcely anything in the story of recent literature has equalled. The fame of George Eliot was greater, but it was,

The author's vivid individuality.

at its commencement, of a less personal, keen and individual kind.

The publisher, who had divined the genius of Currer Bell, to his great credit and honour, invited her to London, and all the literary world crowded to see the little person, who was exactly what she had described herself—a plain young woman, much embarrassed by the notice which she excited; shy and silent, however, as her Jane had not been. She was, we think, allowed to relapse into her natural quiet and to return to her moorland parsonage after this ineffectual attempt to make a literary lion of her. But her reputation was rather enhanced than lessened by the failure. Her second book, "Shirley" (1848), was less powerful than her first, and much more artificial. It showed perhaps something of the strain of a writer put on her mettle, and fully bent on exceeding, if possible, the previous natural and spontaneous effort. But it was also revolutionary to the highest degree, casting aside that discreet veil of the heroine which almost all previous novelists had respected, and representing the maiden on the tiptoe of expectation, no longer modestly awaiting the coming of Prince Charming, but craning her neck out of every window in almost fierce anticipation, and upbraiding heaven and earth, which kept her buried in those solitudes, out of his way.

"Shirley," 1848.

The third of Miss Brontë's works, "Villette," published 1853, returned in a great measure to the

"Villette,"

atmosphere of "Jane Eyre," the scene being chiefly laid in Brussels, and in a school there; and the real hero—after one or two failures—being found in the person of a French master, the fiery, vivacious, undignified and altogether delightful M. Paul Emmanuel, who plays upon the heroine's heart and nerves something after the manner of Rochester, but who is so absolutely real in his fantastic peculiarities and admirable, tender, manly character, that the pranks he plays and the confusion he produces are all forgiven him. Lucy Snowe, the heroine, the cool little proper Englishwoman with the well-concealed volcano under her primness, is by no means so captivating as Jane Eyre, but every detail is so astonishingly true to life, and the force and vigour of the romance—occasionally reaching to fever-heat, and all the more startling from its contrast with the cold white Brussels house, the school atmosphere, and the chill exterior of Miss Snowe—so absorbing, that the book made a still greater impression than "Jane Eyre," and the ultimate fate of M. Paul, left uncertain at the conclusion, was debated in a hundred circles with greater vehemence than many a national problem.

Miss Brontë's retirement.

Miss Brontë had the great advantage with the public of ending there, and leaving her fame to rest upon these three books. She herself accepted the fate involved in her position, as if there had been no brilliant and wonderful episode of fame and fortune,

married her father's curate (after holding up his class to the laughter of the world), and died shortly after in the Yorkshire wolds which she loved, yet hated —which had been the desolate country of her hot and impetuous youth, yet remained the home of the maturer years when she might well have chosen a brighter. No spot in England has been more described and over-described than the grim little village of Haworth, with its little church and parsonage, the home of this extraordinary family. The memoirs of Miss Brontë, or rather of the Brontës in general, afterwards written by her friend Mrs. Gaskell, gave the greatest prominence to this scene, and to the circumstances of the family, in a way which, powerful and interesting as the book was, made a first beginning of that dreadful art of confidential revelation which has gone to such lengths since then. The faults of other members of the household, the tragedy of the dissipated brother, which were such details as honourable families have been wont to bury in their own bosoms and keep religiously from the knowledge of the world, were laid bare without mercy in order to account for the peculiarities of the minds, and manner of regarding the world, of the three sisters. The Brontës were far from unique in such experiences, as all the world knows. It was themselves who were extraordinary, not their circumstances, and Mrs. Gaskell set an example in this book which has added a new terror to death and a new danger to

Her Marriage.

Mrs. Gaskell's "Memoirs of Charlotte Brontë."

those whose lives fall under that fierce light which beats not only upon thrones, but on many less exalted regions in these curious and all-inquiring days.

Mrs. Gaskell, 1810–65.

Mrs. Gaskell herself (1810-1865) had also taken a high place in fiction, slightly previous to the début of Miss Brontë. Her first novel, "Mary Barton," published 1848, was an illustration of a life with which she was thoroughly acquainted, the life of Manchester, not only among its aristocracy of wealth (which she treats somewhat hardly) but among the labouring population of the factories, with all their strongly-marked characteristics. The passionate sense of shame, mingled with the still more impassioned parental love, which seeks and searches for the lost with the ardour of a primitive nature, even while overwhelmed by the weight of disgrace brought upon it, is always a noble and touching picture, and Mrs. Gaskell's perception of the true poetry and nobleness of this situation was much more elevated in fiction than in the after portrayal of actual life above referred to. She could understand, with the profound intuition of genius, how the door should be open night and day for Lizzie's return, and the parent's heart ever intent for the tottering footstep of the wanderer, although she did not hesitate to betray the secrets of poor Bramwell Brontë when the story was one of her own friends and class—thus proving how much more true is sometimes the instinct of art

"Mary Barton," 1848.

than the misleading guidance of fact, and moral indignation.

"Mary Barton" at once established Mrs. Gaskell's reputation, which was confirmed by its successors. The story of "Ruth," published in 1850, roused many criticisms and objections which may seem almost ridiculous in this advanced day. It is the old story of seduction, in which an innocent girl is ruined by over-trust in the immemorial villain of romance; but being taken up by compassionate strangers in a place where she is quite unknown, is introduced by them as a young widow, wins the respect of all around, and brings up her child in an atmosphere of almost excessive honour and purity. This harmless fraud was denounced by the critics with a warmth which it is difficult nowadays to understand. *Nous avons bien vu d'autres*, and are no longer liable to be shocked by such a very pardonable device, though it entails trouble and sorrow we need not add, or it could scarcely have furnished machinery enough for a novel. Among Mrs. Gaskell's other works we may mention "Sylvia's Lovers," a striking and spirited romance, and the remarkable little record of village life, "Cranford," with its little feminine genteel community in which a man was a startling intruder, in which the gentle benevolence and dove-like rancours of the little place are set forth with admirable fidelity and tenderness in the subdued colours natural to such a landscape. Without either the keen

"Ruth," 1850.

"Sylvia's Lovers."

"Cranford."

vivacity or quiet force of Miss Austen, it is yet a book which may be placed on the same shelf with hers; and there could be no higher praise. It was received with an enthusiasm which has suffered no diminution by the course of years.

"Wives and Daughters."

Mrs. Gaskell's last work, "Wives and Daughters," which she left unfinished, though very near its completion, at her death in 1865, was a work of broader effects than any of the others, and was in many respects an almost perfect example of the best English novel of the time, a type much followed and much weakened since. It may be said that in those days there was less competition than now, and fewer champions in the field. Yet such competitors for public favour as Mrs. Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë are few at any time. They were the first of the novelists of the new period (excepting the two great figures which were too conspicuous to be types of a class) to break new ground, and give character to the beginning age.

William Howitt, (1795–1879.) Mary Howitt, (1799–1888.)

We place here, in despair of knowing how to classify them, the pair of writers whose joint names were well known on many a title-page in the forties and fifties of this century—William (1795–1879) and Mary (1799–1888) Howitt, the authors of some novels, and compilers of many books which have disappeared from the surface of the earth altogether, though their names, at least that of Mary Howitt, still "smell sweet and blossom in the dust." They

were both originally Quakers, whence, perhaps, the invariable use of their Christian names, and both began with poetry, which sweetened their homely life of traditional quiet without doing much in itself for the fortunes of the young pair. From this, however, they gradually slid into literature with such productions as the "Book of the Seasons," "Rural Life in England," etc., full of easy and pleasant writing without much reason for it. Many of Mary Howitt's verses, however, were full of tender feeling and secured a certain hold on the youthful reader of the time. They spent a laborious life in book-making, almost always working together and taking up many literary enterprises. Among other works Mrs. Howitt translated the novels of Fredrika Bremer, the Swedish novelist, which for their own merit and originality, as well as for the sake of the excellent translation, became very popular in England. After many years of this hard-working life in England, diversified with travels, each of which had an after-record in a book, the Howitts finally settled in Italy, where William Howitt died in 1879 and his wife, in extreme old age, in 1888.

"Book of the Seasons," "Rural Life in England"

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